

THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

Divided into Four
BOOKS.

Written in Latin, by the
Learned and Devout Man
Thomas of Kempis
CANON REGULAR

Of the Order of
St. *AUGUSTIN*.
TRANSLATED

Into *English*, and in this last Edition,
Reviewed and compared
with several former Editions.

Printed at *Antwerp*, for T.D. 1686.





THE
PREFACE

To the Reader.

AS it is certain, Pious Reader, that no Book of this sort hath been oftner Keprinted in all the Languages of Christendom; so likewise I dare assure thee that no Book better deserveth thy Reading. 'Tis

the whole treasure of Spirituality shut up in a little room for thy greater convenience. Supposing therefore thou art not so much a Critick in Devotion, nor so much a slave to the opinion of the World, as to esteem nothing but what is new, I presume thou wilt not blame my small labour in reviewing, and comparing the several former Editions for setting forth this last. Accept it therefore, and practise the contents. Learn to follow Christ, and thou shalt need no other guide.

THE

THE
L I F E
O F

Thomas à Kempis,
CANON REGULAR,
Drawn out of many
Authors.

T*Homas à Kempis*, was born at *Kempis*, a little Town in the Territories and Diocese of *Collen*, whence also he took his Name. If you behold his Parents with a Worldly Eye, you will neither discover them of noble Blood, nor remarkable Wealth; for all their Nobility was Piety; all their Revenues honesty of Life. They gained their Bread with the Labour of their Hands, and in the Sweat of their Brows, and lived

The Life of

content of the little they had.

God blessed their Bed with two Boys only, as far as can be gathered in the distance we live from that Age, to wit, *John* and *Thomas*. *John* the Elder Brother, having finished his Studies at *Daventry*; and by the favour of *Gerard* the Great his acquaintance and familiarity, being instructed in all good demeanour, and having born many Offices in the Order of the Canon Regulars of *St. Windesems* Congregation, happily departed this Life.

Now *Thomas* of whom we speak, was born about the 1380. year of our Lord God: *Urbane* the Sixth holding the Keys, and *Charles* the Fourth weilding the Scepter of the Empire.

After he had past his Childhood under his Parents care; and grew up to be fit for Learning, he was sent to *Daventry*, the Metropolitan City of *Transilvania*,
being

Thomas à Kempis.

being, as one may gather, about 13 years old. He was drawn to *Daventry* by the renown of one *Florentius* a Pious and Learned Priest, and perfect of the Canon Regulars, whom the frequent Troops of Students which came from thence, had made famous. The Studies of Arts and Sciences did so flourish there at that time, that it might be stiled the *Belgick Athens*.

Being arrived at *Daventry*, his First care was to inquire for his Brother, by whose Counsel and Help (for he had but little or no means) he might be directed how to undertake his Studies. And being commended to Master *Florentius* (for *Gerard* the Great deceased in the year 1384. while our *Thomas* was but yet Four years old) he received him with all the humanity possible; providing him of Lodging, Books, and Livelyhood.

While the Youth, who was of

The Life of

a good disposition, and honest countenance, had means by this occasion to be conversant amongst famous Men for Piety and Learning, who living in the company of *Florentius* were adorned with Religion, innocency of Life, and sincerity of Demeanour: He was seasoned with their manners, with whose conversation he was delighted; being Studious at home, assiduous at School, frequent at Church; so that in a few years space he made such progress in Piety and Learning, as the many Books, never sufficiently praised, Written by him, bear Testimony. While he lived in the Colledge of the Canon Regulars, whatsoever he could gain by Writing (for he was a skilful Pen-man) he put it all into the common Purse.

He was a great Servant of our B. Ladies even from his Childhood, saying certain set Prayers every
every

Thomas à Kempis.

every day to her honour. But, as Childrens Piety is always mutable and inconstant, he began to be cold in this Pious custom. So that by little and little he neglected and deferred his wonted Prayers and Suffrages, first to One day, soon after to Two or Three, then to Four, at length to a Week, and in the End, alas, he gave over all. In the time of this his coldness, he had a Vision by Night, wherein he conceived himself to be, as it were, standing in the Hall by his Master *Florentius*: Where, while with other of his School-fellows, who flocked together to hear the word of God, he attentively gave ear to what was said, the Lady of the World, discovered her self unto him coming down from Heaven in a Cloud and descending into the said Hall, where being most Glorious in her Gracious aspect or countenance, and glittering

A s in

The Life of

in Attire, she compassed the Brothers who Preached the word of God to the Hearers, and now embracing one, now another of them, she seemed to render them thanks, that they endeavoured by wholesome admonition, to effect that the price of her dearest Sons precious Blood might not perish in those young Youths. But he beholding what past: And seeing the Virgin blessed amongst Women, embrace the foresaid Brothers, stood burning and sweating, melting and hoping: and turning, and firmly fixing his Eyes big with Love, upon her, he said in himself, I will a little expect that when the blessed Virgin shall have sufficiently given testimonies of her love to the rest, she may also out of her benignity daign me with her charitable Embracements; whom though I could not honour to her worth, yet I endeavoured it according to my weakness.

But

Thomas à Kempis.

But alas, as the firmest hopes of Mortals, are often answered with the contrary; *Thomas* hoped for a kiss, a sweet pledge of Love, but in lieu thereof he met with a sharp reprehension. For the B. Virgin, having solaced all those with dear embracements, who with their Pious admonitions did season and ripen the flourishing spring of the multitude of hopeful young Youths, she turned at length towards *Thomas*, and casting a severe and correcting Eye upon him: In vain, quoth she, dost thou expect the embracement of sacred Love, cruel Enemy! Who unhappily neglecting my friendship, dost not pay me the wonted and due revenues of thy fervent Prayers. For where are now thy accustomed Prayers? Whither are thy daily Devotions fled? What now become of thy aspirations mixed with Pious Sighs and Tears? Is not Charity wax-

The Life of

the beginning of all things are wont to be little and difficult) very obscure, being hardly known & rarely frequented by any. When he came thither with commendatory Letters from *Florentius*, he was very courteously received of his own Brother, who was the first Priour of the said Monastery: And both of them broke out into that Heavenly acknowledgment: *How good and pleasant a thing it is for Brothers to dwell together!*

Now this candidate of Religion though he wonderful fervently desired to enter into it: Yet, lest he might do any thing too hastily or rashly, he moderated his fervour by a considerate delay, which alone brings forth prudence. And therefore after he had spent Six years in the nature of a Scholar or Prentise, the Sixth year he received the habit, and at the end of the Seventh, he was solemnly professed. He did shine
with

Thomas à Kempis.

with a Marvellous Piety towards God: Obedience and observance towards Superiours: Love and good will towards his fellow Brothers. He never gave way to Idleness, the source of Mischief: But was continually employed, either in Reading Holy Scriptures, Transcribing them for the common use; or in composing something of his own: Wherein he did frequently spend what rested of the Night after Matins, yea even with damage to his Bodily health, to th' end he might oblige all true lovers of virtue.

The whole Bible divided into Four Tomes, a mighty fair Mass-book, and sundry of St. *Bernards* Opuscles, or little works are extant to this day, Written by him most artificially, and industriously in an excellent hand.

It is hard to express how present he was to himself, and how Reverently he performed the
Office

The Life of

Office of the Church, and all Functions thereto belonging.

While he Sung the Psalms, his aspect was always turned towards the Heavens. Inspired with fervent Zeal, and taken with the incredible sweetness of the Psalms he was observed to be ravished out of himself in an Extasie, so that oftentimes he did not stand on the Ground with his heels, but with his tip-toes only touched it, striving to flie into Heaven with the rest of his Body, where he was already in Heart and desire. In Singing he stood always straight up, without ever leaning, either with Back, or Arm upon his seat,

He was always, Day and Night the first that entred, and last that went out of the Church. The Worship of God, and the Comeliness of his House, did wonderfully delight, and dilate his Heart.

So

Thomas à Kempis.

So that while upon a time one said merrily unto him, that he apprehended him happy indeed, and yet not much to be admired, that he sung the Psalms with such alacrity of Voice, and promptitude & Piety of Mind; since *Dauids* Psalms were as savory to him, as dainty Salmon; It is, thanks be to God, as thou sayest, replied he, *Psalmi mihi Salmones*, which yet are tedious and loathsome to those that are not present, and attentive to what they sing, but spare their breasts and voices,

All his discourse was of God, and the Holy Scripture. When he chanced to be in the Company of Grave and Learned Persons, who spoke of Court-businesses, and Worldly affairs, he sat as dumb and ignorant of all the things whereof they Treated, not answering even when he was demanded, unless he were invited thereunto by some remarkable
and

The Life of

and apparent good. Marry, if there were speech of God, and Heavenly things, being demanded his opinion, he spoke, or rather words flowed from him, as continued Brooks sweetly gliding from a clear Cristal Fountain. When he was desired to Preach Extemporally, so he could discover any ones profit in it, he never refused; which yet he would not do, till he had first premeditated for a small space, or took a short nap. He hath such a faculty in Preaching, that very many moved by the same thereof, flocked to the Mount of St. Agnes out of the Neighbouring towns and places more remote, with a greediness to hear him.

His Companions did not least admire his resolute sufferance, in joyfully bearing adversities: His patience, not only in easily tolerating, but also benignly excusing other Mens faults; His sobriety

Thomas à Kempis.

briety in all kinds; Purity of life, and modesty; his care and diligence to advance the profit of the Community, his earnest endeavour to see the Church Beautified and Adorned; his burning Zeal as well as frequency in his Prayers, his Tears plentifully poured out, and other most pregnant proofs of solid Piety. In fine he had conceived so absolute and inward an hatred of all Worldly Vanities, and Allurements, and so Holy a neglect of all transitory things, that he loathed to learn the usual names by which they were called.

And least while he Preached well to others, his Body, which doth aggravate the Soul, might have led him Captive to Sin, and he have become a reprobate, he chastised his Body and brought it into Captivity, disciplining himself with a Whip certain days in the Week, singing in the interim *Stetit Jesus.* He

The Life of

He was so wedded to the reading of the holy Scriptures, and to his Cell, that he often both spoke and wrote this saying. *I have sought rest in all things: yet never found it, nisi in angulis & libellis*, that is, in retiredness and reading.

He was so affable and mild, that tho he desired much to fly it, yet was he chosen Subprior even in the flower of his age, by common suffrage. After that he was made perfect of the Oeconomy, or Procurator of the house, because he seemed to be addicted to alms-deeds, with which charge tho he diligently complied, yet, because it hindred him from his pious contemplation, and writing of books, he was restored to his former office.

It happened often that while he conversed and discoursed amongst his brethren, he perceived God manifestly spake interiorly to his heart; therefore modestly

Thomas à Kempis.

deftly taking an excuse, as tho he were expected by some, he repaired to his chamber: Where pouring out his heart before God, he drunk up that wisdom, which all devout people admire in his most excellent books.

Our gracious Lord did also honour his fervour with a heavenly vision: For while he went from the Mount of St. *Agnes* to visit *John Heusden* Prior, who lay sick at *Windefem*, either upon courtesie, or occasion; and consulting with him about some business appertaining to Religion, lodged there that night: He saw in the dawning of the day certain resplendent troops of blessed spirits running with nimble feet, as tho they hastned to some great mans funeral, to convey his happy soul to their heavenly rest. The truth which he saw, was made good by what he heard: For being awakened by the noise of the table, he leaps.

The Life of

leaps out of bed, and having some sense of what was to happen, he foretold the death of the Prior of *Windeſem*.

He learned by experience to deſpiſe the Devils dreadfulneſs and horreur. For when, upon a certain time, that foul beaſt ſtood about him in a moſt ugly and horrid ſhape, and made towards his bed, he quaked at the firſt approach of that hideous aſpect, not knowing at what defence to put himſelf againſt the guile of the dreadful enemy of man-kind. At length encouraged by the holy Ghoſt, he began as well as he could the Angelical ſalutation, or *Ave Maria*, with a trembling voice, as one in fear; But the Devil, as tho he had not been moved at all with that ſalutation, drew nearer and nearer unto him quaking with fear, till he cryed out *Jeſus Chriſtus Amen*. Whereupon the Devil hearing that terrible

Thomas à Kempis.

ble name, struke as it were with a dreadful thunderbolt, turned away his horrid countenance, and fled away with speed. *Thomas* therefore observing that the Devil durst not stand against the virtue of so powerful a name, resumed courage, raised his panting Heart, and with iterated cries prosecuted his flying Enemy with the blessed name of *Jesus Christ*. And ever as he redoubled his cries, the foul fiend redoubled his speed. The blessed Man observing this, rendered thanks to God, and said in himself: If by this most Holy Name, *Jesus*. I be able to break down and vanquish the power of Darkness, I will no more, as heretofore I have done, either fear their machinations, through weakness of Faith, or shake under their dreadful menaces.

Yea those other Signs and Miracles, which in divers passages he relates

The life of

relates were done by the Prayer of a Person whom he names not. Were firmly conceived to be done by his own Prayers: as that of the recovering of the Book which was lost in the Cell, and divers other things.

He was of a little more than a middle stature: Of a Manly Shape and Countenance: Of a lively Brown colour: Of a sharp and strong Sight, so that even to his Grave he never used Spectacles.

When he had most commendably, and with great fruit to his fellows, led a Religious life in the Mount of St. *Agnes* for the space of 71 years (counting the Five years which he spent there before he was Clothed) he was Summoned by his Lord and Saviour to the Mount of Eternity, which he had so oft before beheld at distance so oft breathed after, and his blessed Soul freed from her earthly prison, did flee into the Eternal
Taber-

Thomas à Kempis.

Tabernacles, there to enjoy her
God for ever. He died the 92
year of his Age, the 8. of *Aug-*
ust, 1471.

B

A

A
TABLE
OF THE
CHAPTERS
Contained in this
BOOK.

The First B o o k.

CHAP. I.

O *F the Imitation of Christ,
and contempt of all Worldly
Vanities.* pag. 1

Chap. II. *Of the humble conceit
of our selves.* p. 5

Chap.

A Table

Chap. III. Of the Doctrine of Truth.	p. 3
Chap. IV. Of Prudence, and Foresight in our Actions.	p. 14
Chap. V. Of the Reading of Holy Scriptures.	p. 15
Chap. VI. Of Inordinate Affections.	p. 17
Chap. VII. Of flying vain Hope and Pride.	p. 18
Chap. VIII. That too much Familiarity is to be skunned.	p. 21
Chap. IX Of Obedience and Subjection.	p. 22
Chap. X. Of avoiding Superfluity of words.	p. 24
Chap. XI. Of the obtaining of Peace, and Zeal of Spiritual Profit.	p. 26
Chap. XII. Of the Profit of Adversity.	p. 30.
Chap. XIII. Of resisting Temptations.	p. 32
Chap. XIV. Of avoiding rash Judgment.	p. 37
A 2	Chap

of the Chapters.

- Chap. XV. Of *works done out of Charity.* p. 39
- Chap. XVI. Of *bearing with the defects of others,* p. 41
- Chap. XVII. Of *a solitary Life.* p. 44
- Chap. XVIII. Of *the Examples of the Holy Fathers.* p. 46
- Chap. XIX. Of *the exercises of a good Religious person.* p. 50
- Chap. XX. Of *the love of solitude and silence.* p. 56
- Chap. XXI. Of *Compunction of Heart.* p. 62
- Chap. XXII. Of *the consideration of humane misery.* p. 67
- Chap. XXIII. Of *the consideration of Death.* p. 72
- Chap. XXIV. Of *Judgment, and the punishment of Sin.* p. 79
- Chap. XXV. Of *the fervent amendment of our whole Life.* p. 86

A Table

The Second B o o k.

C H A P. I,

- O**F *Spiritual Conversation.* p. 96
- Chap. II. Of *humble Submission.* p. 103
- Chap. III. Of *a good and peaceable Man.* p. 104
- Chap. IV. Of *a pure Mind, and upright Intention,* p. 107
- Chap. V. Of *the Consideration of ones self.* p. 109
- Chap. VI. Of *the comfort of a good Conscience.* p. 112
- Chap VII. Of *the Love of Jesus above all things.* p. 115
- Chap. VIII, Of *familiar friendship with Jesus.* p. 117
- Chap, IX. Of *the want of all Comfort.* p. 122

of the Chapters.

Chap. X. *Of Thankfulness for
the Grace of God.* p. 128

Chap. XI. *How few the Lovers
of the Cross of Christ are.*
p. 132

Chap. XII. *Of the high way of
the Holy Cross.* p. 136

The Third B o o k.

C H A P. I.

O*F the inward Speech of Christ
unto a faithful Soul.* p. 148

Chap. II. *That Truth speaketh
inwardly without noise of
words* p. 150

Chap. III. *That the words of
God are to be heard with hu-
mility, and that many weigh
them not.* p. 153

Chap. IV. *That we ought to live
in Truth and Humility in the
sight of God.* p. 158

Chap.

A Table

- Chap. V. *Of the wonderful effect of Divine Grace.* p. 161
- Chap. VI. *Of the proof of a true Lover.* p. 167
- Chap. VII. *That Grace is to be hid under the veil of humility.* p. 171
- Chap. VIII. *Of a mean conceit of our selves, in the sight of God.* p. 176
- Chap. IX. *That all things are to be referred unto God, as unto the last end.* p. 179
- Chap. X. *That despising the World, it is sweet to serve God.* p. 181.
- Chap. XI. *That the desires of our Heart are to be examined and moderated.* p. 185
- Chap. XII. *Of the effect of Patience, and of strife against concupiscence.* p. 188
- Chap. XIII. *Of the humble obedience of a Subject, according to the example of Christ.* p. 192

of the Chapters.

Chap. XIV. *Of the secret Judgments of God to be considered, lest we be extolled in our good deeds.* p. 195

Chap. XV. *What we ought to do and say, in every thing which we desire.* p. 198

Chap. XVI. *That true comfort is to be sought in God alone.* p. 201

Chap. XVII. *That all our care is to be placed in God.* p. 204

Chap. XVIII. *That temporal miseries, by the Example of Christ, must be born patiently.* p. 206

Chap. XIX. *Of suffering of injuries, and who is proved to be truly Patient,* p. 209

Chap. XX. *Of the acknowledging of our own Infirmities: and of the miseries of this Life.* p. 212

Chap. XXI. *That we are to rest in God above all his gifts.* p. 216

Chap.

A Table

- Chap. XXII. *Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.* p. 222
- Chap. XXIII. *Of Four things that bring much peace.* p. 226
- Chap. XXIV. *Of flying curious inquiry of the Life of others.* p. 231
- Chap. XXV. *Wherein doth the firm peace of the Heart, and true Profit consist.* p. 233
- Chap. XXVI. *Of the excellency of a free mind, which humble Prayer better deserveth, then Reading.* p. 236
- Chap. XXVII. *That private Love much hindreth from the chiefest Good.* p. 239
- Chap. XXVIII. *Against the Tongue of Slanderers.* p. 243
- Chap. XXIX. *How we ought to call upon God, and bless him when tribulation draweth near.* p. 244

of the Chapters.

Chap. XXX. Of craving aid,
and confidence of recovering
Grace. p. 246

Chap. XXXI. Of the contempt
of all Creatures, to find our
Creatour. p. 251

Chap. XXXII. Of denial of
our selves, and forsaking all
our affections. p. 255

Chap. XXXIII. Of inconstancy
of the Heart, and of directing
our final intentions unto God.
p. 258

Chap. XXXIV. That God is
sweet above all things, and in
all things; to him that loveth.
p. 260

Chap. XXXV. That there is no
security from Temptation in
this life. p. 263

Chap. XXXVI. Against the vain
judgments of men. p. 266

Chap. XXXVII. Of a full, and
pure resignation of our selves
for the obtaining freedom of
Heart. p. 268

Chap .

A Table

- Chap. XXXVIII. Of good Government in outward things:
and of recourse to God in dangers. p. 271
- Chap. XXXIX, That a Man must not be over earnest in his Affairs. p. 274
- Chap. XL. That Man hath no good of himself nor any thing whereof he can glory. p. 276
- Chap. XLI. Of the contempt of all temporal honours. p. 280
- Chap. XLII. That our peace is not to be placed in Men. p. 281
- Chap. XLIII. Against vain and secular knowledge. p. 284
- Chap. XLIV. Of not drawing outward things to our selves. p. 287
- Chap. XLV. That credit is not to be given to all Men, and how prone Man is to offend in words. p. 288
- Chap. XLVI. Of putting our trust in God, when evil words arise. p. 293

of the Chapters.

Chap. XLVII. *That all grievous things are to be endured for life everlasting.* p. 298

Chap. XLVIII. *Of the everlasting day, and shortness of this life.* p. 301

Chap. XLIX. *Of the desire of everlasting life, and how great rewards are promised to those that fight valiantly.* p. 306

Chap. L. *How a desolate person ought to offer himself into the hands of God.* p. 313

Chap. LI. *That a Man ought to imply himself in works of Humility, when force is wanting for higher exercises.* p. 319

Chap. LII. *That a Man ought to esteem himself unworthy of comfort, and to have deserved stripes.* p. 321

Chap. LIII. *That the grace of God is not given to those that savour of earthly things.* p. 325

Chap. LIV. *Of the different motions of Nature & Grace.* p. 328

Chap.

A Table

- Chap. LV. *Of the corruption of Nature, and efficacy of divine Grace.* p. 335
- Chap. LVI. *That we ought to deny our selves, and imitate Christ, by the Cross.* p. 341
- Chap. LVII. *That a Man should not be too much dejected, when he falleth into some defects.* p. 345
- Chap. LVIII. *Of not searching into high matters, and into the secret Judgments of God.* p. 348
- Chap. LIX. *That all our hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.* p. 356
-

The Fourth B o o k.

A devout Exhortation unto Holy Communion. The voice of Christ. p. 316

C H A P. I.

W*ith how great reverence Christ ought to be received,* p. 362
Chap.

of the Chapters.

- Chap. II. *That great goodness and charity of God is bestowed upon Man, in this Sacrament. The voice of the Disciple. p. 372*
- Chap. III. *That it is profitable to communicate often. p. 378*
- Chap. IV. *That many benefits are bestowed upon them that communicate devoutly. The voice of the Disciple. p. 382*
- Chap. V. *Of the dignity of this Sacrament, & priestly function. The voice of the Disciple. p. 388*
- Chap. VI. *An Interrogation of the exercise before Communion. The voice of the Disciple. p. 392*
- Chap. VII. *Of the discussing of our own conscience, and purpose of amendment. The voice of the Beloved. p. 393*
- Chap. VIII. *Of the oblation of Christ upon the Cross, & resignation of our selves. The voice of the Beloved p. 397*
- Chap. IX. *That we ought to offer up our selves, & all that is ours unto*

A Table

unto God, and to pray for all.

The voice of the Disciple, p. 399

Chap. X. That the Holy Communion is not lightly to be forborn, *The voice of the Beloved.*

P. 404

Chap. XI. That The Body of Christ, & the holy Scriptures are most necessary unto a faithful Soul. *The voice of the Disciple.*

P. 410

Chap. XII. That he who is to Communicate ought to prepare himself with great diligence. *The voice of the Beloved. p. 417*

Chap. XIII. That a devout Soul ought to desire with her whole heart to be united unto Christ in the B. Sacrament. *The voice of the Disciple.*

P. 421

Chap. XIV. Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to receive the Body of Christ. *The voice of the Disciple.*

P. 424

Chap. XV. That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility,
and

of the Chapters.

*and denial of our selves. The
voice of the Disciple.* P. 427

Chap. XVI. *That we ought to
manifest our necessities to Christ,
& to crave his grace. The voice
of the Disciple.* P. 431

Chap. XVII. *Of burning love,
and vehement desire to receive
Christ. The voice of the Disci-
ple.* P. 433

Chap. XVIII. *That Man must
not be a curious searcher of this
Sacrament, but an humble fol-
lower of Christ, submitting his
sense unto faith. The voice of
the Beloved.* P. 438

OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

The First B O O K.

C H A P. I.

*Of the Imitation of Christ, and
contempt of Worldly Vanities,*

HE that follows me,
walks not in Darknes,
saith our Lord. These
are the words of Christ,
by which we are admonished, that
we ought to imitate his Life and
man-

of the Chapters.

*and denial of our selves. The
voice of the Disciple.* P. 427

Chap. XVI. *That we ought to
manifest our necessities to Christ,
& to crave his grace. The voice
of the Disciple.* P. 431

Chap. XVII. *Of burning love,
and vehement desire to receive
Christ. The voice of the Disci-
ple.* P 433

Chap. XVIII. *That Man must
not be a curious searcher of this
Sacrament, but an humble fol-
lower of Christ, submitting his
sense unto faith. The voice of
the Beloved.* P 438

OF THE
FOLLOWING
O F
CHRIST.

The First B O O K.

C H A P. I.

*Of the Imitation of Christ, and
contempt of Worldly Vanities,*

HE that follows me,
walks not in Darknes,
saith our Lord. These
are the words of Christ,
by which we are admonished, that
we ought to imitate his Life and
man-

manners, if we desire to be partakers of his Divine light, and be delivered from all blindness of Heart. Wherefore let us make it our chiefest care to meditate upon the Life of Christ.

2. The Doctrine of Christ far excelleth all the Doctrine of Saints : And whosoever hath the true Spirit, will find a secret Manna hidden therein. It happens notwithstanding, that many who often hear the Gospel, yet taste little of it, for want of this Spirit ; But whosoever desireth to understand fully and perfectly the words of Christ, he must first endeavour to conform his Life wholly unto the Life of Christ.

3. What doth it profit thee to dispute profoundly of the high Mysteries of the Trinity, if thou wantest humility ; and therefore art displeasing to the same B. Trinity. It is certain that high words do not make a Man Holy

of Christ. Lib. I. 3

or Just : but 'tis a vertuous Life that makes him dear unto God. I had rather feel Compunction , then understand the Definition thereof. If thou didst know the whole Bible by Heart, as also the sayings of all the Philosophers, what would all that profit thee without Charity, and the Grace of God? Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but only to Love God, and wholly to serve him. This is the highest wisdom thou canst learn, by contempt of the World, to tend towards the Kingdom of Heaven.

4. 'Tis vanity therefore to seek after fading Riches and to repose any trust in them. 'Tis vanity likewise to aspire unto honours and high degrees. 'Tis vanity to follow the appetites of the Flesh, and to desire that for which thou must afterwards suffer grievous punishments. 'Tis vanity to wish for a long Life,
and

4 *The Following*

and yet to be careless of living well. 'Tis vanity to mind nothing but this present life, and not to foresee those things which are to come. 'Tis vanity to set our Love on that which passeth in a moment, and not to hasten thither where Everlasting joy is permanent.

5. Call often to mind that Proverb of the Scripture: that the Eye is never satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear filled with hearing. Endeavour therefore to withdraw thy Heart from the affection of visible things, and to turn thy self to the invisible. For they that follow their sensuality, do stain their own Conscience, and lose the Grace of God.

C H A P. II.

*Of the humble conceit of our
selves.*

ALL Men naturally desire to know : but what will knowledge avail without the fear of God? It is certain that an humble Husbandman, who serveth God, is better then a proud Philosopher, who, neglecting the knowledge of himself, labours in considering the course of the Heavens. He that knows himself well, grows daily more and more contemptible in his own conceit, and takes no delight in the praises of the World. If I had the knowledge of all things which are in the World, and were not in Charity, what would it help me in the sight of God, who will Judge me according to my Works.

2. Be

6 *The Following*

2. Be not too curious of knowing much: for thou wilt find much distraction and deceit therein. The Learned are willing to seem so unto others and to be accounted wise. There are many things, whereof the knowledge brings little or no profit to the Soul: And he is very unwise, that will bestow his labour upon any other thing, then what concerns the good of his Soul. Many words do not satisfie the desire of our Heart: But a good Life brings comfort to the mind, and a pure Conscience gives great assurance in the sight of God.

3. By how much the more and better thou understandest, so much the more greivously shalt thou be judged for it, unless thy Life be more holy withal. Be not therefore extolled in thy own mind for any Art or Science which thou knowest: But rather let the knowledge which is given thee, make

make thee more fearful. If thou thinkest that thou understandest or knowest much : Know also, that there are many things more, which thou knowest not. Think not too well of thy self, but rather confess thy ignorance. Why wilt thou prefer thy self before others, since there are many more Learned and wise then thou art ? If thou wilt know or learn any thing which may profit thee, desire not to be known, but to be little esteemed of among Men.

4. The highest and most profitable lesson, is the true knowledge and consideration of our selves. It is great wisdom and perfection, to have little or no esteem of our selves, and to think always well and commendably of others. If thou shouldest see another sin openly or commit any heinous offence, yet oughtest thou not to esteem the better of thy self; for thou knowest not how long thou shalt
le

8 *The Following*

be able to hold in a good estate.
We are all frail, but thou ought-
est to esteem none more frail than
thy self.

C H A P. III.

Of the Doctrine of Truth.

HAPPY is he whom Truth by
it self doth teach, not by
Figures and Voices that pass a-
way; but as it is in it self. Our
own opinion and sense doth often
deceive us, and it discerns little.
What avails it to dispute and con-
tend about dark and hidden things,
whereas for being ignorant of them
we shall not so much as once be re-
prehended at the day of Judgment?
It is a great folly to neglect those
things which are profitable and
necessary, and give our minds to
those which are curious and hurt-
ful. We have Eyes and do not see.

2. What

of Christ. Lib. I. 9

2. What have we to do with the terms and distinctions of Logicians? He, to whom the eternal word speaks, is delivered from the multitude of opinions. By that one word all things do speak, and all declare the same: And this is the beginning of all things, and that which speaks unto us. No man can understand or judge rightly without that word. He, to whom all things are one, who draws all things to one, and sees all things in one, may enjoy a quiet mind, and remain peaceable in God. O God, the Eternal Truth, make me one with Thee in everlasting charity. It is tedious to me often to read and hear many things. In Thee is all that I would have, and can desire: Let all Doctors hold their peace: Let all creatures be silent in thy sight: Speak thou alone unto me.

C

3. By

3. By how much the more one is retired within himself, and becometh inwardly sincere, and pure ; so much the more and higher misteries doth he understand without labour : Because he receiveth light of understanding from above. A pure, sincere and stayed spirit is not distracted, tho employed in many works : Because he worketh all to the honour of God, and laboureth for inward tranquility, without seeking his own Interest in any thing he doth. Who hinders and troubles thee more then the unmortified desires of thine own heart ? A good and devout man first of all disposeth within himself all his outward works : Neither do they draw him to the desires of an inordinate inclination ; but he ordereth them according to the rule of reason. Who hath a greater combate, then he that laboureth to overcome himself ? This
ought

ought to be our endeavour, to gain victories over our selves daily, to grow stronger, and be more able to subdue our passions, and still to get ground in this way.

4. All perfection in this life hath some imperfections mixt with it : And no speculation of ours is void of obscurity. An humble knowledg of thy self is a more secure way to God, than a deep search after knowledg . And yet knowledg is not to be blamed, nor is the only knowledg of any thing whatsoever to be disliked, it being good in it self, and ordained by God : But a good conscience and a vertuous life is to be preferred before it. And because many endeavour, rather to get knowledg than to live well, therefore they are often deceived, and reap either none or very little profit of their labours.

5. Oh ! If men bestowed as much labour in the rooting out

12 *The following*

of vices, and planting of vertues, as they do in moving doubts and questions, there would not be so much hurt done, nor so great scandal given in the world, nor so much looseness practised in monasteries. We shall not be examined at the day of Judgment what we have read, but what we have done : Nor how well we have spoken ; but how vertuously we have lived. Tell me now, where are all those great Doctors and maisters, with whom thou hast been so well acquainted, whilst they lived and flourished in Learning ? Now others possess their livings, and perhaps do scarce ever think of them. They seemed in their life time to be something, and now they are not spoken of.

6. Oh! how soon doth the glory of this world pass away ? Would to God, their life had been answerable to their learning, then
had

had their study and reading been to good purpose! How many perish in this world by reason of vain learning, who take little care of the service of God? And because they rather choose to be great than humble; therefore they vanish away in their own thoughts. He is truly great, that is great in charity: He is truly great that is little in himself, and that makes no account of the height of honours. He is truly wise, that accounts all earthly things as dung, that he may gain Christ. And he is truly learned, that fulfils the will of Christ, and forsakes his own.

CHAP. IV.

*Of Prudence, and Foresight in
our Actions.*

WE must not give ear to every suggestion or instinct, but warily and leasurely ponder all things according to the will of God. But (Alas) such is our weakness, that we often believe and speak evil of others, rather than good. Those, who are perfectly vertuous, doe not easily give credit to every thing, that is told them: Because they know, that humane frailty is prone to evil and very subject to fail in words.

2. It is great wisdom not to be rash in thy proceedings, nor to stand stily in thy own conceits ; as also not to believe every thing which thou hearest :

Not

Nor presently to relate again to others, what thou hast heard, or dost believe. Consult with him that is wise and of a good conscience, and still seek to be instructed by one that is better than thy self, rather then follow thy own inventions. A good life makes a man wise according to God, and gives him experience in many things. By how much the more humble one is in himself, and more subject and resigned unto God : So much the more prudent and peaceable shall he be.

CHAP. V.

Of the Reading of holy Scriptures.

WE must not seek for eloquence, but Truth in the holy scriptures. Every part of them is to be read with the same spirit it was made. We

should rather search after spiritual profit in scriptures, than subtilty of speech. We should be as willing to read devout and simple books, as high and Learned. Let not the reputation of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or small learning: But let the pure love of Truth move thee to read. Search not who speaks this or that, but mark what is spoken.

2. Men pass away, but the Truth of our Lord remains for ever. God speaks unto us sundry waies, without respect of persons. Our own curiosity often hinders us in the reading of scriptures, when as we will examine, and discourse that which we should pass over without more ado. If thou desirest to reap profit, read humbly, plainly, and faithfully: Never desire the estimation of learning. Inquire willingly, and hear with silence the words

words of holy men: Dislike not the parables of thy Elders, for they are not recounted without cause.

CHAP. VI.

Of Inordinate Affections.

Whensoever a man desires any thing inordinately, he is presently disquieted in himself. The proud and covetous can never rest. The poor and humble of spirit, live together in all peace. The man that is not wholly dead in himself, is quickly tempted and overcome in small and trifling things. The weak in spirit, and he that is yet in a manner subject to his appetites, and prone to sensuality, cannot easily draw himself altogether from earthly desires: And therefore he is often afflicted, when he goes

C 5 about

about to retire himself from them, and easily falls into indignation, when any opposition is made against him.

2. And if he hath therein followed his appetite, he is presently disquieted with remorse of conscience, for that he hath yeilded to his passion, which profits him nothing for obtaining of the peace he sought for. True quiet of mind therefore is gotten by resisting our passions, not by obeying them. There is no peace in the heart of a carnal man, nor of him that is addicted to outward things, but in the spiritual and fervent.

CHAP. VII.

Of flying vain Hope, and pride.

HE is vain that puts his trust in men or creatures. Be not

not ashamed to serve others, for the love of Jesus Christ ; not to be esteemed poor in this world. Presume not upon thy self, but place thy hope in God. Do what lies in thy power, and God will assist thee. Trust not in thy own knowledg, nor in the subtilty of any living creature ; but rather in the grace of God, who helps the humble, and humbles the presumptuous and proud.

2. Glory not in wealth, if thou hast it : Nor in the power of thy friends, but in God, who gives all things, and above all desires to give thee himself. Extol not thy self for the stature and beauty of thy body, which is dissolved and disfigured with every little sickness. Take not pleasure in thy natural gifts, or wit, least thereby thou displease God, unto whom appertains all the good whatsoever nature hath given thee.

3. Esteem not thy self better than others, least perhaps in the sight of God, who knows what is in man, thou be accounted worse than they. Be not proud of thy good works, for the judgments of God are far different from the judgments of men, and that often offends him, which pleases them. If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others, that so thou maist conserve humility. It is no prejudice unto thee, to esteem thy self worse than all the world: But it hurts thee very much to prefer thy self before any one. The humble enjoy continual peace: But in the heart of the proud is envy and frequent indignation.

CHAP. VIII.

*That too much Familiarity is to
be Shunned.*

Lay not thy heart open to every one : But treat of thy affairs with the wise, and such as fear God. converse not much with young people and strangers. Flatter not the rich, nor appear willingly before great personages. Keep company with the humble, simple, devout and virtuous ; and confer with them of those things, which may edify. Be not familiar with any woman, but in general commend all good women to God. Desire to be familiar with God only, and his Angels : And fly the acquaintance of men.

2. We must have charity towards all, but familiatity with
all

all is not expedient. It falls out sometimes, that the fame of some person that is unknown is much esteemed; whose presence notwithstanding is not grateful to the eyes of the beholders. We think sometimes to please others by our company; and at the same time we rather give them distaste by our disordered manners, and the evil customs which they discover in us.

CHAP. IX.

Of obedience and subjection.

IT is a great matter to live in obedience, to be under a superiour, and not to be at our own disposing. It is much safer to live in the state of subjection, than of Government. Many live under obedience rather by necessity, than charity: And such are
discon-

discontented and do easily repine and murmur. Neither can they attain to freedom of mind, unless they put themselves willingly and heartily under obedience for the love of God. Go whither thou wilt, Thou shalt find no rest but in humble subjection under the Government of a superiour. The esteem and change of places hath deceived many.

2. True it is, that every one willingly doeth that which agrees most with his own sense and liking; and is apt to affect those most, that are of his own mind. But if God be amongst us, we must leave our own judgment, that so peace and sweetness may be the better preserved. Who is so wise, that he can fully know all things? Trust not therefore too much to thy own conceits: But be willing to hear the judgment of others. If thy opinion be good, and yet thou dost leave it for the
love

love of God, and follow the opinion of another, thou shalt reap a greater benefit thereby.

3 I have often heard, that it is more secure to hear and take counsel, than to give it. It may also fall out, that each ones opinion may be good: But to refuse to yeild to others, when as reason or cause requires it, is a token of willfulness and pride.

CHAP. X.

Of Avoiding Superfluity of words.

FLy the tumult of men as much as thou canst; for the talk of worldly affairs hinders very much, although they be recounted with a sincere intention; for we are soon defiled, and enthralled with vanity. I could wish that I had often times held my peace, when I have spoken; and that I had
not

not been in company. Why do we so willingly speak, and talk with one another, when notwithstanding we seldome return to silence, without hurt of conscience? The reason why we talk so willingly, is, for that by discoursing one with another, we seek to receive comfort one of another, and desire to ease our mind overwearied with sundry thoughts: And we most willingly talk and think of those things, which we most love and desire: Or of those which we feel most contrary unto us.

2. But alas, oftentimes in vain, and to no end: For this outward comfort is cause of no small loss of inward and divine consolation. Therefore we must watch and pray, least our time pass without any fruit or profit. If it be lawful, and expedient for thee to speak, speak those things which may edify. An evil custom of
speak-

26 *The following*

speaking much, and the neglect
of our own good, doth very much
slacken the reins to inconfi-
dence speech. Yet devout discourses
of heavenly things do much
further our spiritual progress, especially
where persons of one
mind and spirit are gathered to-
gether in God.

CHAP. XI.

*Of the obtaining of Peace, and
zeal of spiritual profit.*

WE might enjoy much peace,
if we would not busy our
selves with the words and
deeds of other men, which apper-
tain nothing to our charge. How
can he live long in peace, who
thrusts himself into the cares of
others? Who seeks occasion a-
broad: Who little or seldom re-
collects himself within his own
breast?

breast? Blessed are the simple, for they shall enjoy much peace.

2. What is the reason, why some of the Saints were so perfect and contemplative? Because they laboured to mortify themselves wholly to all earthly desires: So that they could give themselves unto God with their whole heart; and freely attend to their own affairs. We are too much possessed with our own passions, and too solicitous for transitory things. We also seldom overcome any one vice perfectly, nor are we inflamed with a fervent desire to profit in spirit, and therefore we remain cold in devotion, and full of tepidity.

3. If we were perfectly dead unto our selves, and not too much intangled in our interiour, then we might also have some taste of divine things, and feel the sweetness of heavenly contemplation. The greatest and indeed the whole
impe-

impediment is, for that we are not free from our passions and disordered inclinations : Neither do we endeavour to enter into the path of perfection, which the Saints have walked in before us : And when any small adversity befalls us, we are too soon dejected, and turn our selves to humane comforts.

4. If we endeavoured courageously to stand in the battel, surely we should feel the favourable assistance of God, from heaven. For he is always ready to succour those that fight manfully, and confide in his grace : And he gives us occasion of fighting, that we may overcome. If we esteem our progress in a religious life to consist only in these exteriour observations, our devotion will quickly be at an end. But let us set the axe to the root, that being freed from passions, we may enjoy true peace of mind.

5. If every year we would root out one vice, we should quickly become perfect. But now we perceive that often it goes contrary, and that we were better, and of a more pure conscience at the beginning of our conversion, than after many years of our profession. Our fervour and profit should encrease dayly: But now tis counted a great matter, if one can retain but some part of his first spirit. If we would use but a little violence in the beginning, then should we be able to perform all things afterwards with ease and joy of heart.

6. It is a hard matter to leave that to which we are accustomed; but harder to do against our own wills. But if thou dost not overcome harder matters, resist at least thy inclination in the first motions, break off evil customes, least perhaps by little and little they draw thee to greater difficulty.

ty. Oh! if thou didst consider how much inward peace thou shouldest procure unto thy self, and joy to others by demeaning thy self well, I suppose thou wouldst be more carefull of thy spirituall profit.

CHAP. XII.

Of the profit of Adversity.

IT is good that we have sometimes troubles and adversities. For they often make a man enter into himself, remember that he is here in banishment, and ought not to place his trust in any worldly things. It is good that we be sometimes contradicted, and that others have a bad conceipt of us, although we do and intended well. These things help often to the attaining of humility, and defend us from vain glory: For then we chiefly

chiefly seek God for our inward witness, when we are outwardly contemned by men, and small credit is given to us.

2. And therefore a man should settle himself so fully in God, that he need not to seek many comforts of men. When a good and vertuous man is afflicted, tempted or troubled with evil thoughts, then he understands better the great need he hath of Gods assistance, without whose help he perceives, he can do nothing that is good. Then also he grieves, laments and prays for the miseries he suffers. Then is he weary of living longer, and wishes that death would come, that he might be dissolved and be with Christ. Then also he well perceives; that compleat security and perfect peace cannot be had in this world.

CHAP. XIII.

Of resisting Temptations.

SO long as we live in this world, we cannot be without tribulation and temptation; For as it is written in *Job*: Temptation is the life of man upon earth. Every one therefore ought to be careful about his temptations and to watch in prayer, lest the Devil find place to deceive him who never sleeps, but still goes about seeking whom he may devour. No man is so perfect and holy, but he hath sometime temptations: And we cannot be altogether free from them.

2. Temptations are often profitable unto men, though they be troublesome and grievous: For in them man is humbled, purged and instructed. All the Saints have

have passed and profited through many Tribulations and Temptations : And they, who could not bear Temptations, became reprobate and fell from God. There is no Order so Holy, nor Place so Secret, where Temptations and Adversities cannot come.

3. There is no Man that is altogether free from Temptations, whilst he lives upon Earth, for the cause of it is within our selves, being born with inclination to evil. When one Temptation or Tribulation goes away, another comes : And we shall ever have something to suffer, because we have lost that Innocency with which we were Created. Many seek to shie Temptations, and do fall more grievously into them. By flight alone we cannot overcome : But by patience and true humility, we become stronger than all our Enemies.

4. He that only avoids them
D out.

34 *The Following*

outwardly, and doth not pluck
 them up by the Root, shall prosper
 little; yea, Temptation will re-
 turn sooner to him; and he shall
 feel himself in worse case than be-
 fore. By little and little, and
 by Patience with longanimity
 (through Gods help) thou shalt
 more easily overcome, than with
 violence and importunity. Take
 often Counsel in Temptations, and
 deal not roughly with him that
 is Tempted; but give him comfort
 as thou wouldst wish to be done
 to thy self.

5. The beginning of all
 Temptations, is inconstancy of
 mind, and little confidence in God.
 For as a Ship without a Stern
 tossed to and fro with the Wave
 so the Man that is negligent, and
 leaves his purpose is many wayes
 tempted. Fire tries Iron, and
 Temptation a just Man. We know
 not oftentimes what we are able
 to do, but Temptations shew what

we are. We must be watchful, especially in the beginning of the Temptation, for the Enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of our Hearts, but be resisted without the Gate, at his first knock. Wherefore one said: Withstand the beginnings, for an after remedy often comes too late. First there comes to the mind an evil thought, then a strong imagination thereof, afterwards delight, and an evil motion, and then consent: And so by little and little our wicked Enemy gets full entrance, whilst he is not resisted in the beginning. And how much the longer one is negligent in resisting, so much weaker doth he become daily, and the Enemy stronger against him.

6. Some suffer greatest Temptations in the beginning of their Conversion, others in the latter end: Others again are much troubled almost through the whole

36 *The Following*

time of their Life. Some are but easily Tempted according to the wisdom and equity of the Divine Providence, which weighs the state and deserts of Men: And ordains all things for the Salvation of his Elect.

7. We ought not therefore to despair when we are Tempted; but so much the more fervently to Pray unto God, that he will vouchsafe to help us in all Tribulations; who surely according to the saying of *St. Paul*, will so dispose the Temptation, that we may be able to sustain it. Let us therefore humble our selves under the hand of God in all Temptations and Tribulations; for he will save and exalt the humble in Spirit.

8. In Temptations and Afflictions Man is proved how much he hath profited: And his merit is thereby the greater before God, and his vertues do more openly appear. Neither is it any great matter

matter to see a Man Devout and Feruent, when he feeleth no heaviness : But if in time of Adversity he bear himself Patiently , there is hope of much good. Some are kept from great Temptations, and are often overcome in small ones, which daily occur ; to the end that being humbled, they may never presume on themselves in great matters, who in so small things see themselves so weak.

C H A P. XIV.

Of avoiding rash Judgment.

TURN thy Eyes upon thy self, and beware thou Judge not rashly the deeds of others. In Judging of others, a Man always labours in vain, often erreth, and quickly sinneth ; but in Judging and discussing of himself, he always laboureth with profit. We

38 *The Following*

often Judge of things according to our own desire; for private affection beceaves us easily of true Judgment. If God were always the pure intention of our desire, we should not be so much troubled with the repugnance of our sensuality.

2. But oftentimes some inward secret inclination, or outward affection occurreth, which draweth us after it. Many secretly seek themselves in their actions, and know it not. They seem also to live in good peace of mind, when things are done according to their will, and opinion: But if it succeed otherwise than they desire, they are presently troubled and much afflicted. The diversity of Judgments and Opinions often causeth dissensions between Religious and Devout persons.

3. An old custom is not easily broken, and no Man is willingly lead further than he himself liketh

keeth. If thou dost rely more upon thy own reason or industry, than upon the vertue of obedience to Jesus Christ, it will be long before thou be illuminated with grace: For God will have us perfectly subject unto himself, and that we transcend the narrow limits of humane reason, enflamed with his Love.

C H A P. XV.

Of works done out of Charity.

NO evil ought to be done for any worldly thing, or for the love of any Man: But yet for the profit of one that stands in need, a good work is sometimes to be left off, or changed also for a better. For by doing this, a good work is not lost, but changed into another of greater merit. The interiour work without Cha-
D 4 rity

40 *The Following*

rity profits nothing : But whatsoever is done out of Charity, be it never so little and contemptible, becomes wholly fruitful. For God regards more with how much love one worketh, than how much he doth. He doth much, that loves much.

2. He doth much, that doth a thing well : He doth well, who rather serves the common good of others, than his own will. It seems often times to be Charity, and is rather Carnality : Because natural inclination, self-will, hope of reward, and desire of our own commodity, will seldom be wanting.

3. He that hath true and perfect Charity, seeks himself in nothing : But only desires in all things that the Glory of God should be exalted. He also envies none, because he loves no private good, neither will he rejoyce in himself, but wisheth above all things to enjoy God. He attributes

butes nothing that is good to any Man, but refers it wholly to God, from whom, as from the Fountain, all things proceed, in whom finally all Saints have perfect rest by fruition of his Glory. Oh! how easily might he that hath one spark of perfect Charity, discern that all Earthly things are full of Vanity.

C H A P. XVI.

Of bearing with the defects of others.

THose things which a Man cannot amend in himself or in others, he ought to suffer patiently, until God ordain otherwise. Think that perhaps it is better so, for thy Tryal and Patience, without which our merits are not much to be esteemed. Thou oughtest to Pray notwithstanding, when

42 *The Following*

thou hast such impediments, that God would vouchsafe to help thee, and that thou mayst bear them patiently.

2. If one, that is once or twice warned, doth not amend, contend not with him, but commit all to God, that his will may be fulfilled, and his name honoured, in all his Servants, who knows how to turn evil to good. Endeavour to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others: Because thou thy self also hast many things which must be suffered by others. If thou canst not make thy self such an one as thou wouldst, how canst thou expect to have another in all things to thy liking? We would willingly have others perfect, and yet we amend not our own faults.

3. We would have others severely corrected, and will not be corrected our selves. The large liberty of others displeaseth us :

And

And yet we will not have our desires denyed us. We will have others kept under by rigorous Laws, but in no sort will we our selves be restrained. And thus it appears, how seldom we weigh our Neighbour in the same Ballance with our selves. If all Men were perfect, what should we have to suffer from our Neighbour for God?

4. But now God hath thus ordained, that we may learn to bear one anothers burden; for no Man is without defect, no Man without burden, no Man sufficient of himself, no Man endued with so much wisdom as he needs: But we ought to bear with one another, comfort, help, instruct, and admonish one another. Occasions of Adversity best discover how great vertue every one hath: For occasions make not a Man frail, but do shew what he is.

44 *The Following*

C H A P. XVII.

Of a Solitary Life.

THou must learn how to break thy own will in many things, if thou wilt have peace and concord with others. It is no small advantage to dwell in Monasteries, or a Congregation, and to converse therein without complaint, and to persevere there faithfully until death. Blessed is he that hath lived well therein, and made a happy end. If thou wilt persevere in Grace, as thou oughtest, and profit in Vertue, esteem thy self as a banished Man, and a Pilgrim upon Earth. Thou must be contented for the love of Christ to be esteemed as a fool in this World, if thou desirest to lead a Religious Life.

2. The habit and shaving of the Crown, do profit little: But change of manners and perfect Mortification of passions, make a true Religious Man. He that seeks any thing else but God, and the good of his Soul, shall find nothing but tribulation and sorrow. Neither can he remain long in peace, that Labours not to be in the meanest place, and subject to all.

3. Thou camest to Serve, not to Govern. Know that thou wast called to suffer and to labour, not to be idle and spend thy time in talk. Here it is that Men are proved as Gold in the Furnace. Here no Man can stand, unless he humble himself with his whole Heart, for the Love of God.

CHAP. XVIII.

*Of the examples of the holy
Fathers.*

CONsider the lively examples of the holy Fathers, in whom true perfection and religion shined : And thou shalt see how little it is, and almost nothing which we do now in these days. Alas ! What is our life, if it be compared to them ? The saints and friends of Christ served our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and weariness, in watching and fasting, in prayer and holy meditations, in persecutions and many reproaches.

2. Oh ! How many and grievous tribulations suffered the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and all the rest that endeavoured

deavoured to follow the steps of Christ? For they hated their lives in this world, that they might possess their souls in everlasting life. Oh! How strict and poor a life did the holy Fathers lead in the wilderness! How long and grievous temptations did they suffer! Yea and how grievously were they assaulted by their spiritual enemy! How fervent and frequent prayers offered they daily unto God! How rigorous abstinence did they use! What great zeal, and fervour had they of their spiritual profit! How strong and continual a combat had they for the overcoming of vices! How pure and upright intention did they keep unto God? In the day they laboured, and in the night they were employed in long prayer, although when they laboured too, they ceased not from mental prayer.

3. They spent all their time
with

48 *The following*

with profit: Every hour seemed short which they employed in the service of God: They forgot the necessity of corporal refection, through the great sweetness they felt in contemplation. They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kindred: They desired to have nothing which appertained to the world: They scarce took things necessary for the sustenance of life; they grieved to serve their bodies even in necessity. They were poor therefore in earthly things, but very rich in grace and vertues. Outwardly they wanted, but inwardly they were replenished with grace and spiritual comfort.

4. They were strangers to the world, but near and familiar friends to God. They seemed to themselves as nothing, and abject to this world: But they were precious and beloved in the sight of God. They were grounded in true humi-

humility, lived in simple obedience; walked in charity and patience: And therefore they profited dayly in spirit, and obtained great grace in the sight of God. They were given for an example to all religious persons, and their example should more stir us up to a desire of our spiritual profit, than the number of the tepid draw us to a neglect thereof.

5. Oh! How great was the fervour of all religious persons in the beginning of their holy institution! How great was their devotion to prayer! How diligent their emulation of vertue! How exact discipline flourished! How great reverence and obedience under the rule of their superiours did they observe in all things! Their footsteps yet remaining testimony, that they were indeed holy and perfect men. Who fighting so valiantly, trode the
world

50 *The following*

world under their feet. Now he is greatly accounted of, who transgresseth not the rule, and who can with patience endure that which he hath undertaken.

6. Oh coldness and negligence of our state! that we so quickly decline from our first fervour, and are come to that pass, that very sloth and coldness of spirit makes our lives tedious unto us! Would to God the desire to profit in virtue did not wholly sleep in thee, who hast often seen the holy examples of devout and religious souls.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the exercises of a good Religious person.

THe life of a Religious person ought to shine with all virtues, that he may be such inwardly

ly as he seems outwardly unto men. And thou hast reason to be much more within, than is perceived without : For God sees the heart, whom we ought to reverence most highly wheresoever we are; and walk in purity like Angels in his sight : And to renew daily our purposes, and stir up our selves to fervour, as if this were the first day of our conversion; and to say, help me, my Lord God, in this my good purpose, and in thy holy service, and grant that I may now this day begin perfectly; for that which I have done hitherto, is nothing.

2. According to our purpose shall be the success of our profit : And much diligence is necessary unto him, that will profit much. And if he that firmly purposeth, often fails, what shall he do, that seldom purposes any thing or with little certainty? It may fall out sundry ways, that
we

52 *The following*

we leave off our purpose : And if for light occasions, we omit our accustomed exercises, it seldom passes without some loss. The purpose of just men is rather grounded upon the grace of God, than on their own wisdom, in whom also they always have confidence, in whatsoever they take in hand. For man doth purpose, but God disposes : Neither is the way of man in his own hands.

3. If any accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted for some work of charity, or of intention to profit our neighbour, it may easily afterward be recovered : But if it be lightly left, through inconstancy or negligence, it is an offence, and will prove hurtfull. Though we endeavour what we can, yet shall we easily fail in many things. But yet we must always purpose something certain, especially, against that which most hinders us. We must examine

mine well, and order both our exterior and interior actions: Because both are expedient for our progress in vertue.

4. If thou canst not always recollect thy self, yet do it sometimes, and that at least once every day: To wit, in the morning or evening. In the morning make thy good purpose; in the evening examine thy self, what thou hast done that day in thought, word, or deed: Because in these thou hast often perhaps offended God and thy neighbour. Arm thy self with courage against the malicious attempts of thy enemy. Refrain gluttony, and thou shalt more easily bridle all the disordered inclinations of the flesh. Never be altogether idle, but either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or working something for the common good: But the exercises of the body are to be discreetly used, and not to be undertaken equally of all.

5. Those

54 *The following*

5. Those things which are not common, are not to be done in publick: For private things are best done in secret. Beware of neglecting that unto which thou art bound by common rule, to follow thy own inclination in particular devotion: But having fully and faithfully accomplished all thy duties, and those things which are enjoined thee, if thou hast further leasure, return to thy self according to the desire of thy own devotion. All cannot use the same exercise, but one is more convenient for this person, another for that. According to the diversity of times also, diverse exercises are fitting: Some suite better with festival days, others with days of labour. We have need of one kind in temptations, and of others in time of peace and quiet. We desire to think of other things, when we are sorrowful, than we do when we

we are chearful in our Lord.

6. When principal feasts draw near, good exercises are to be renewed: And the intercession of Saints more fervently to be implored. From feast to feast, we should make some good purpose, as though we were then to depart out of this world, and to come to the everlasting feast of heaven. And therefore we ought to prepare our selves carefully at holy times, and to live more devoutly, and to keep more exactly all things that we are to observe, as though shortly we were to receive reward of our labour at Gods hand.

7. And if it be deferred, let us think that we were not well prepared, nor worthy as yet of so great glory, as shall be revealed in us at the time appointed: And let us labour to prepare ourselves better for our departure. Blessed is that servant (saith St. Luke) whom when his Lord cometh, he shall

shall find watching : Verily I say unto you, he shall place him over all that he possesseth.

CHAP. XX.

Of the love of solitude and silence

SEek a fit time to attend to thy self; and often think of the benefits of God. Leave curious things. Read over such matters, as may cause rather compunction, than the labour of much study. If thou wilt withdraw thy self from superfluous talk, and idle wandring about, as also from hearing of news and tales, thou shalt find sufficient and fit time to think of good things. The greatest Saints avoided the company of men as much as they could, and chose to live to God in secret.

2. One said : As often as I
have

have been amongst men, I have returned less man. The same we find by experience when we talk long. It is easier to keep silence altogether, than not to exceed in words. It is easier for a man to keep home, than to demean himself as he ought in all things abroad. He therefore that desireth to attain to internal and spiritual graces, ought with *Jesus* to withdraw himself from the people. No man goeth safely abroad, but he that gladly keepeth home. No man governeth securely, but he that delighteth to live in subjection. No man commandeth securely, but he that hath learned to be ready in obeying.

3. No man rejoiceth securely, unless he hath within him the testimony of a good conscience: And yet the security of Saints was always full of the fear of God; Neither were they less careful and humble in themselves, for
E that

58 *The following*

that they shined outwardly with grace, and great vertues. But the security of evil men ariseth from pride, and decieveth them in the end. Never promise to thy self security in this life, although thou seem to be a good Religious man, or devout Hermit.

4. Oftentimes those, who in the judgment of men were of better esteem, have been in greater danger, by reason of their too much confidence. Wherefore it is more profitable for many, not to be altogether free from temptations, but to be often assaulted: least they should be too secure, and so perhaps be lifted up in pride: least also they should too freely give themselves to outward comforts. Oh! how good a conscience should he keep, that would never seek transitory joy, nor busy himself with the things of this world! And how great peace and quietness should he possess, that would

ould cut off all vain solicitude,
and only think of divine things,
and such as are profitable for his
soul, and place all his hope in God!

5. No man is worthy of heavenly comfort, unless he have diligently exercised himself in holy compunction. If thou desirest true contrition of heart, retire thy self into some secret and solitary place, and exclude from thy mind the tumults, and unquietness of the world, as it is written: In your chambers be ye sorry. In thy Cell thou shalt find that which abroad thou shalt often lose. Thy Cell, if thou continue in it, waxeth sweet, and if thou love not to stay in it, it becometh wearisome. If in the beginning of thy conversion thou accustom thy self to remain in it, and keep it well, it will be afterwards a dear friend unto thee, and a most pleasant comfort.

6. In silence and quietness a

60 *The following*

devout soul perfecteth her self, and learneth the Secrets of holy Scriptures. There she findeth floods of tears, with which she may every night wash and cleanse her self, and be made so much the more familiar with her Creator, by how much the further off she liveth from all worldly disquiet, whosoever therefore withdraw himself from his acquaintance and friends, God with his holy Angels will draw near unto him. It were better for a man to lie hidden, and have care of himself, than being careless of his soul to work miracles. It is commendable in a Religious person to go abroad but seldom, to avoid being seen, and to be unwilling to see men.

7. Why wilt thou see them which is not lawful for thee to have? The world passeth away, and all the delights of it. The desires of our sensuality draw us to walk abroad, but when the hour

is past, what bringest thou home, but a burdened conscience and distracted thoughts? A joyful going abroad bringeth often a sorrowful coming home; and a merry evening makes a sad morning. So all carnal joy entreth gently, but in the end it causeth remorse and destruction. What is to be seen elsewhere, which thou canst not see here? Here thou seest heaven and earth, and all the elements, of which all other things are made.

8. What is there any where to be seen that can long continue under the sun? thou thinkest perhaps to satiate thy self, and have thy fill: But thou shalt never attain it. If it were possible for thee to see all things created, present before thy eyes, what were it all but a vain and unprofitable sight? Lift up thy eyes to God in heaven, and ask pardon for thy sins and negligences. Leave

62 *The following*

vain things to the vain. Attend thou to that which God commandeth. Shut thy door upon thee, and call upon thy beloved *Jesus*. Be thou with him in thy Cell, for thou shalt not find so great peace in any other place. If thou hadst stayed within, and not given ear to idle news, thou hadst kept thy self better in good peace. But now that thou delightest sometimes to hear novelties, it is fit thou shouldest suffer for it some trouble and disquiet of mind.

CHAP. XXI,

Of compunction of Heart.

IF thou wilt profit any thing, keep thy self always in the fear of God, and give not too much scope to liberty. Contain all thy senses under the rule of discipline, and give not thy self to foolish mirth.

mirth. Give thy self to compunction of heart, and thou shalt find devotion. Compunction discovereth much good, which with too much liberty is quickly lost. Tis strange that any man can ever perfectly rejoyce in this life, if he consider his banishment, and weigh the many perils, wherewith his soul is environed. The levity of our mind, and the little care we have of our faults, makes us not to feel the sorrows of our soul.

2. But we often vainly laugh, when we have just cause to weep. There is no true liberty, or good mirth, but that which is in the fear of God, accompanied with a good conscience. Happy is he, that can avoid all cause of distraction, and draw himself to the union of holy compunction. Happy is he, that can abandon all that may defile or burden his conscience. Fight manfully : One cus-

64 *The following*

tom overcomes another. If thou canst forbear to intermeddle with that, which belongs to others, they will not hinder thee in that which thou hast to do.

3. Busy not thy self in matters, which appertain to others: neither do thou meddle at all with the affairs of thy betters. Look first of all to thy self, and have a more special care to admonish thy self, then whomsoever thou lovest best. If thou hast not the favour of men, be not therefore grieved: but let this seem unto thee a most just cause of grief, that thou lookest not to thy self with that care which becometh the servant of God, and a devout religious person. It is oftentimes better and more secure, that a man hath not many consolations in this life, especially such, as are agreeable to the inclination of our corrupted nature. But that we have none at all, or do seldom
taste

taste divine comforts, the fault is ours, who do not seek for compunction of heart, nor wholly forsake the vain comforts of this world?

4. Acknowledge thy self unworthy of divine comforts, and that thou hast deserved great tribulation. When a man hath perfect contrition, then is the whole world bitter and loathsome unto him. A good man findeth always sufficient cause of tears and sorrow: for, whether he consider himself, or weigh the estate of his neighbour, he knoweth that no man liveth here without tribulation. And how much the more throughly he considereth himself, so much the more is his sorrow. Our sins and vices in which we are so plunged, that we can seldom contemplate heavenly things, do minister unto us occasion of most just sorrow and hearty contrition.

5. If thou didst think more di-

E 5 ligent-

ligerly of thy death, then of living long, thou wouldst without doubt be more careful in the amendment of thy life. And if thou wouldst consider within thy self, the pains of Hell, or of Purgatory, I am perswaded it would move thee to endure any labour or pain whatsoever in this world, and not to fear any kind of austerity. But because these things enter not to the heart, and we still love that which delighteth us, therefore we remain cold and void of spiritual vigour.

6. Oftentimes our want of Spirit is the cause, that our wretched bodies do so quickly complain. Pray therefore with all humility to our Lord, that he will vouchsafe to give thee the spirit of contrition, and say with the Prophet: Feed me, O Lord, with the bread of Tears, and give me to drink with tears in measure.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the consideration of humane misery.

THou art miserable wheresoe-
ever thou be, and whither-
soever thou turnest, if thou turn-
est not thy self to God. Why art
thou troubled when things suc-
ceed not as thou wouldest and de-
sirest. Who is there that hath
all things at his will? neither I
nor thou, nor any man upon
earth. There is not any man in
this world without some tribula-
tion or affliction, though he be
a King, or a Pope. Who think-
est thou then is in the best case?
Truly he that willingly suffereth
something for God.

2. Many weak men will say:
Behold how well such a one
lives, how rich, how powerful,

how beautiful, how great a man he is : But lift up thy eyes to the riches of heaven, and thou shalt see that all temporal prosperity is nothing, full of uncertainty, and which rather oppresseth then otherwise : for it is never had without solicitude and fear. The felicity of men consisteth not in having abundance of temporal riches : a mean sufficeth. It is truly misery enough to live upon earth. How much more a man desireth to be spiritual, so much the more distastful is this present life unto him : For thereby he better perceiveth and seeth more clearly the defects of humane corruption. To eat, to drink, to watch, to sleep, to labour, to repose, and to be subject to all other necessities of nature, is doubtles a great misery to a devout mind, that would gladly be free, and delivered from all sin.

3. The inward man is much
oppressed

oppressed with these corporal necessities, whilst he is in this world. And therefore the holy Prophet prayeth with great devotion to be delivered from them, saying: Deliver me O Lord, from my necessities. But woe be to them that know not their misery, and much more to them that love this miserable and corruptible life. For some are so dotingly affected unto it, that altho with labour and begging, they scarce get bread to eat, yet if they might live here always, they would care but little for the kingdom of heaven.

4. O Senseless creatures, and Infidels in heart! who lie buried so deep in earth, that they have no tast nor feeling, but of sensual things. But miserable wretches! they shall in the end feel, to their loss, how vile, and of no esteem was that which they loved. The Saints of God, and the devout Servants and Friends of Christ
respected

respected little what pleased their natural inclination, or what flourished in this life ; but with their whole hope, and intentions, they sought after the riches of heaven. Their whole desire was carried up to those everlasting treasures, which are invisible ; lest they might have been drawn to base affections, by the love of visible things. Lose not thy hope of profiting in spiritual matters : There is yet time : The hour is not yet past.

5. Why wilt thou defer thy good purpose ? Rise up in this very instant, and begin, and say ; now is the time to work, the time to fight : Now is the fit time to amend my self. When any tribulation or affliction doth befall thee, then is the time to merit. Thou must pass through fire and water before thou comest to rest. Unless thou use violence on thy self, thou shalt not overcome thy evil

evil inclinations. As long as we carry about with us this frail body of ours, we can never be without sin, nor live without tediousness and grief. We would gladly enjoy quietness, and be delivered from all misery; but because we have by sin lost our innocency, we have together with it lost also our happiness. And therefore it behoveth us to have patience, and to expect the mercy of God till this iniquity have an end, and that which is mortal be swallowed up of life.

6. Oh! How great is the frailty of man always inclined to evil: To day thou confessest thy sins, and to morrow thou committest again the same which thou didst confess: Now thou purposest to take heed, and within an hour thou dost as if thou hadst made no purpose at all. We may therefore with great reason humble our selves, and never admit any thought

72 *The following*

thought of our own esteem, being so weak as we are, and subject to every change. Full soon (God knows) is that lost by negligence, which with much labour was hardly gotten by grace.

7. What will become of us in the end, who do so timely begin to wax cold? Wo be unto us, if we will now give our selves to ease, as if all were already in peace and security: When as yet, there scarce appeareth so much as any sign of true Sanctity in our conversation. It were needful that we were taught good manners again like children, if so perhaps there might be some more hope of our amendment and profit in spirit.

CH A P. XXIII,

Of the consideration of Death.

THe hour of Death will quickly overtake thee, and therefore

fore look how thou livest. To day a man is living, and to morrow he doth not appear; and being once out of sight, he is also quickly out of mind. Oh! dullness and hardness of mans heart, who thinketh only on that he seeth, and foreseeth not that which is to come. Thou shouldest always so order thy thoughts and actions, as if this very day thou wert to depart this life. If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not much fear death. It is better to avoid sin, than to fly death. If thou be not prepared to day; how wilt thou be prepared to morrow? To morrow is uncertain, and thou knowest not, whether thou shalt see it or no.

2. What doth it avail us to live long, when we amend so little? A long life doth not always make us better; nay rather it oftentimes heapeth upon us a greater load of sins. Oh! that we
had

74 *The following*

had spent one day well in this world ! Many do reckon the years of their conversion, but oftentimes, the fruit of their amendment is very slender. If it be a dreadful thing to die, perhaps it will be more dangerous for thee to live long. Blessed is he, that hath always before his eyes the hour of his death ; and disposeth himself daily thereunto. If thou hast at any time seen a man die, think with thy self, that thou must one day pass the same way.

3. When it is morning, think that perhaps thou shalt not live until night ; and when evening comes, do not dare to promise unto thy self the next morning. Be always ready, and so order thy life, that death may never take thee unprepared. Many die suddenly ; for the son of man will come, when we least think of it. When that last hour shall come, thou wilt begin to think far otherwise

therwise of thy life, and much lament that thou hast been so slack and negligent.

4. Oh! How wise and happy is he, that now laboureth to be such in his life, as he wisheth to be found at the hour of his death? For the perfect contempt of the world, the fervent desire to profit in vertue, the love of Discipline, the labour of Pennance, the readiness of Obedience, the forsaking of our Selves, and the bearing patiently of all adversity for the love of Christ, will give great confidence of a happy end. Thou maist do much good whilst thou art well; but when thou art sick, what thou wilt be able to do, I know not. Few doe grow better, and amend themselves with sickness; as also they that wander much abroad, seldom become holy.

5. Trust not upon thy friends or neighbour: Neither do thou
put

76 *The following*

put off to future times the care of thy souls health : For thou shalt sooner be forgotten, than thou dost imagine. It is better now to provide in time , and do some good before thou goest, then to trust in the help of others, when thou art gone If thou hast no care of thy self now when thou hast time, who will be careful for thee hereafter ? The time, which now thou hast, is very precious, Now are the days of health : Now is the time acceptable. But alas ! That thou spendest it so little to thy profit, in which thou mightest gain eternal life ! The time will come, when thou wilt desire one day, or one hour to amend, and I cannot assure thee, that thou shalt obtain it.

6. Oh ! my dearest brother, from how great danger maist thou deliver thy self ? From how great fear maist thou be freed, if thou dost now live in fear, and careful
of

of Christ. Lib. I. 77

of thy death. Labour to live in such sort, that at the hour of death, thou maist rather rejoyce than fear. Learn now to die to the world, that thou maist then begin to live with Christ. Learn now to contemn all earthly things, that thou maist then freely go to Christ. Chastise now thy body with Pennance, that thou maist then have an assured confidence.

7. Ah fool! Why dost thou think thou shalt live long, being not certain of so much as one day? How many have been deceived, and taken out of this world on a suddain, when they least expected it! How often hast thou heard, how such a one was suddenly slain, another was drowned, another falling from some high place broke his neck, another dyed at his meat, another when he was playing? One came to his end by fire, another by the sword, another by the

78 *The Following*

the plague, another dyed by the hands of Theives. so that Death is the end of all, and the life of man passeth away like a shadow.

8. Who will remember thee? and who will pray for thee after thy death? Do now, beloved brother, do now what thou canst, for thou knowest not how soon thou shalt dy, nor what shall befall thee after thy death. Now whilst thou hast time, heap together eternal riches. Think on nothing, but on the health of thy soul. Have care only of that which belongeth to God. Make the Saints of God thy Friends, By honouring them, and imitating their virtues, that when thou departest this life, they may receive thee into their everlasting dwellings.

9. Esteem thy self as a pilgrim, and stranger upon earth, and as one to whom the affairs of this world do nothing appertain. Keep thy heart free, and lifted up

to God; for thou hast not here
any permanent city. Send thither
thy daily prayers with sighs and
tears; that thy soul may deserve
to pass with much happiness to
our Lord after death.

C H A P. XXIV.

*Of Judgement, and Punish-
ment of Sin.*

IN all things consider the end,
and how thou shalt be able to
stand before that severe Judge,
from whom nothing can be hid-
den, and who is not appeased
with gifts, nor admitteth excuses,
but judgeth according to Justice.
Oh! most wretched and foolish
Sinner, that fearest sometimes
the countenance of an angry
Man: What Answer wilt thou
make to God, to whom all thy
Wickedness is known? Why pro-
videst

videſt thou not for thy ſelf againſt that rigorous day of Judgment, in which no Man can be excuſed, or defended by another, but every one will be burden enough to himſelf? Now thy Pains are profitable, thy Tears acceptable, thy Cryes are heard, thy Sorrow ſa- tiſieth for thy Sins, and purgeth thy Soul.

2. The patient Man hath a great and healthful Purgatory, who receiveth injuries, grieveth more for the others malice, then for his own wrongs; Prayeth willingly for his Adverſaries, and from his Heart forgiveth their offences; delayeth not to ask forgiveness of whomſoever he hath offended; is ſooner moved to Compaſſion then to Anger; uſeth often violence upon himſelf, and laboureth with his whole force to ſubdue the Fleſh in all things to the Spirit. It is better to purge our Sins and Vices now, then

then to reserve them for Purgatory. It is certain that the inordinate love, which we bear to our selves, deceiveth us.

3. What other thing shall that Fire feed on, but thy Sin? How much the more thou sparest thy self now, and followest the desires of thy corrupted Nature, so much the more grievously shalt thou be punished hereafter; and so much the more matter dost thou keep for that purging Fire. In the self same wherein a Man hath sinned, shall he be more grievously punished. There shall the slothful be pricked forwards with burning Goads. There shall the Gluttons be tormented with insatiable Hunger and Thirst. There shall the Lascivious, and the lovers of Pleasures be covered over with burning Pitch and Brimstone. The Envious like raging Dogs, shall there howl for grief.

4. There every Vice shall have

its proper torment. The proud shall be full of all shame and confusion. The covetous shall be in miserable want. One hour of pain there shall be more sharp, then a hundred years of most hard Penance here. There is no rest there, nor comfort for the Damned. Here in this World our Labours cease sometimes, and we enjoy the comfort of our Friends. Be now solicitous and sorrowful for thy Sins; that in the day of Judgment thou maist be secure in the company of the Blessed Souls. For then shall the just stand in great constancy, against those that afflicted and oppressed them. Then shall he stand to Judge, who now doth humbly submit himself to the Judgment of Men. Then shall the poor and humble have great confidence, and the proud shall be compassed about on all sides with fear.

5. Then will it appear, that
he

he was wise in this World, who had here learned to be as a Fool and despised for Christ. Then shall affliction patiently suffered delight us, and iniquity shall stop her Mouth. Then shall the Devout rejoyce, and the Irreligious mourn. Then shall the Flesh which hath been mortified and chastised flourish more, than if it had been always nourished in delights. Then shall the poor Garment shine, and precious Robes appear contemptible. Then shall the mean Cottage be more commended, then the sumptuous Pallace. Then will constant Patience more avail us, than all Earthly Power. Then will simple obedience be more esteemed, than all Worldly wisdom.

6. Then shall a good and pure Conscience yield us more comfort, than all the profound learning of Philosophy. Then shall the contempt of Riches weigh more than all the Treasures of Worldly persons.

84 *The Following*

sons. Then wilt thou be more comforted that thou hast Prayed devoutly, than that thou hast fared daintily. Then wilt thou be more joyful that thou hast observed silence, than that thou hast talked much. Then will good works appear of much more esteem, than fair words. Then a strict Life and hard Penance will be more pleasing, than all Earthly delights. 'Accustom thy self now to suffer a little, that thou maist then be delivered from more grievous pains. Prove here first what thou canst endure hereafter. If now thou canst bear so little, how wilt thou be able to endure everlasting Torments? If now a little suffering makes thee so impatient, what will Hell fire do hereafter? Assure thy self, thou canst not have two Paradises. It is impossible for thee to enjoy here the delights of the World, and Reign hereafter with Christ in Heayen.

Of Christ. Lib. I. 85

7. If thou hadst hitherto lived always in Honours and Delights, what would it avail thee, if thou shouldest presently die? all is Vanity but to love God, and only to serve him. And he that loveth God with his whole Heart, needeth to fear neither Death, Punishment, Judgment, nor Hell: For perfect love gives secure access to God. But he that delighteth always in Sin, what wonder though he always fear Death, and be terrified with the thought of Judgment. Yet it is good, that if love be not of force to withhold thee from sin, that at least the fear of Hell may restrain thee. And he that layeth aside the fear of God, can never continue long in good state, but falleth quickly into the Snares of the Devil.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

*Of the fervent Amendment of
our whole Life.*

BE watchful and diligent in the Service of God, and often think with thy self wherefore thou camest, and why thou didst leave the World. Was it not that thou mightest live to God, and become a spiritual Man? Go on therefore with courage: Thou shalt shortly receive the reward of thy Labours, and there shall be no more fear nor sorrow in the confines of thy habitation. Thou must labour here a while: Thou shalt afterwards have great rest: Yea Everlasting joy. If thou continuest faithful and diligent in serving God, do not doubt but God will be faithful and liberal in giving thee reward. Thou oughtest

est to have a good hope of getting the victory, but thou must not make thy self assured thereof, least thou wax negligent or be puffed up with pride.

2. When one that was in great anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once (being oppressed with grief) prostrate himself in a Church in Prayer before an Altar, and had said within himself: Oh, If I knew that I should yet persevere! he presently heard as it were a voice from God, which said: What if thou didst know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldest do then, and thou shalt be secure. And being herewith comforted, and strengthened in mind, he committed himself wholly to the will of God; and that noysome anxiety ceased: Neither had he any mind to search curiously any further, to know what should befall him; but rather

ther laboured to understand what was the perfect, and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work.

3. Hope in our Lord and do good, saith the Prophet, and Inhabit the Land, and thou shalt be fed in the Riches thereof. One thing there is that draweth many back from that Spiritual good, and the diligent amendment of their lives: The horror of the difficulty, and the labour of the combat. But they above others profit most in vertue, that endeavour most to overcome those things which are grievous, and contrary unto them. For there a Man profiteth more, and deserveth greater grace, where he more overcometh, and mortifieth himself in Spirit.

4, But all Men have not alike to overcome and mortifie: Yet he that is Zealous and diligent, though

though he have more passions, shall profit more in vertue, then another that is of a more temperate disposition, if he be less fervent in the pursuit of vertue. Two things chiefly help to our amendment, to wit, to withdraw our selves violently from that to which Nature is viciously inclined and to labour earnestly for that Vertue, which we most want. Be careful also to avoid with great diligence those things in thy self, which do most displease thee in others.

5. Gather some profit to thy Soul out of every occasion, and wheresoever thou be: So that if thou seest or hearest any good, stir up thy self to the imitation thereof. But if thou seest any thing worthy of reproof, beware thou do not the same. And if at any time thou hast done it, labour quickly to amend it. As thy Eye observeth others, so art

F 5 thou

thou also noted by others. Oh, how sweet and comfortable a thing it is, to see the Servants of Christ Feruent and Devout, as also endued with vertuous and decent manners? And on the contrary, how pitiful and grievous a thing it is, to see them that live in a dissolute and disordered sort, not applying themselves to that, for which they were called! Oh, how great damage and great danger is it to neglect the good purposes of their vocation, and to busie themselves in that which appertaineth not unto them, and which is not committed to their care!

6. Be mindful of the purpose thou hast made, and have always before the Eyes of thy Soul, the Picture of thy Saviour Crucified. Thou hast good cause to be ashamed, looking upon the life of Christ, seeing thou hast so slackly endeavoured to conform thy self unto him, though thou
hast

hast walked a long time in the Service of God. A Religious person that exerciseth himself seriously, and devoutly in the most holy life, and passion of our Lord, shall there abundantly find whatsoever is necessary, and profitable for him: Neither shall he need to seek any thing elsewhere, but only in Jesus. Oh, if Jesus Crucified would come into our Hearts, how quickly and fully should we be instructed in all truth!

7. A fervent Religious person taketh and beareth all well that is commanded him: But he that is negligent and cold, hath tribulation upon tribulation, and is afflicted on all sides: For he is void of inward consolation, and is forbidden to seek external comforts. A Religious person that liveth not according to discipline, is in great danger of the ruin of his Soul. He that seeketh liberty and ease, shall always live in disquiet: For

92 *The following*

one thing or other will still displease him.

8. How do so many other Religious persons, who live under the strict rule of Monastical discipline? They seldom go abroad, they live retiredly, they feed meanly, they are clothed coarsely, they labour much, speak little, watch long, rise early, spend much time in Prayer, read often, and keep themselves in all kind of discipline. Consider the Carthusians, Cistercians, and the Religious Men and Women of divers Orders, how they rise every night to sing Praises unto God. How unseemly then is it for thee to be slothful in so Holy a work, when as so great multitudes of Religious persons do begin to glorifie God.

9. Oh, that we had nothing else to do, but always with our Mouth and Heart to Praise our Lord God! Oh, that thou might-
est

est never have need to Eat, nor Drink, nor Sleep; but mightest always praise God, and only employ thy self in the exercises of the Spirit: Thou shouldest then be much happier, then now thou art, when for so many necessities thou art constrained to serve thy Body, would to God these necessities were not at all, but only the Spiritual refections of the Soul, which (alas) we tast of too seldom.

10. When a Man cometh to that estate, that he seeketh no comfort of any creature, then doth he begin to take perfect contentment and delight in God. Then shall he be contented with whatsoever doth befall him in this World. Then shall he neither rejoyce in great matters, nor be sorrowful for small, but with great integrity and confidence commit himself to God: Who shall be unto him all in all,
to

to whom nothing doth perish
nor die, but all things do live
unto him, and serve him at a
beck without delay.

11. Remember always the
end, and how that time lost ne-
ver returns. Without care and
diligence thou shalt never get
vertue. If thou beginnest to
wax cold, it will be evil with
thee: But if thou give thy self
to fervour of Spirit, thou shalt
find much peace, and feel less
labour, through the assistance of
Gods grace, and love of ver-
tue. The fervent and diligent
Man is ready and prepared for
all things, It is harder to re-
sist Vices and passions, then to
toil in Bodily Labours. He that
avoideth not small faults, by
little and little falleth into grea-
er. Thou wilt always rejoyce
in the Evening, if thou spend
the day profitably. Be wathchful
over thy self, stir up thy self,

warn

warn thy self, and whatsoever
becomes of others, neglect not
thy self. The greater violence
thou usest against thy self, the
more thou shalt profit.

The End of the First Book.

OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

The Second Book.

CHAP. I.

Of Spiritual Conversation.

THe kingdom of God is within you, saith our Lord. Turn thy self with thy whole heart unto our Lord, and forsake this miserable world, and thy soul shall

shall find rest. Learn to despise exterior things, and to give thy self to the interiour, and thou shalt perceive the kingdom of God to come into thee. For the kingdom of God is peace, and joy in the holy Ghost, which is not given to the wicked. Christ will come into thee, and shew thee his divine comfort, if thou prepare for him a worthy mansion within thee. All his glory and beauty is within, and there he pleaseth himself. He often visits the inward man, and hath with him sweet discourses, pleasant comfort, much peace, wonderful familiarity.

2. Oh faithful soul, make ready thy heart for this bridegroom, that he may vouchsafe to come unto thee, and dwell within thee. For he saith: If any love me, he will keep my words, and we will come unto him, and will make our aboad with him. Give therefore unto Christ a place in thy

98 *The following*

thy heart, and deny entrance to and
all others. When thou hast Christ ever
thou art rich, and he will suffice per
thee. He will be thy faithful and
provident helper in all things, m
so as thou shalt not need to trust n
in men. For men are soon chang- d
ed, and quickly deceived: But a
Christ remaineth for ever, and
standeth firmly unto the end.

3. There is little trust to be
put in a frail and mortal man,
though he be profitable and dear
unto thee: Neither oughtest thou
to be grieved much, if sometimes
he cross and contradict thee.
They that to day take thy part,
to morrow may be against thee;
and so on the contrary, they of-
ten turn like unto the wind. Put
all thy trust in God, and fear,
and love him: He will answer
for thee: And do in all things
what is best. Thou hast not here
a dwelling City, and wherefoe-
ver thou be, thou art a stranger,
and

and pilgrime: Neither shalt thou ever have rest, unless thou be perfectly united unto Christ.

4. Why dost thou linger, and make delayes here, since this is not the place of thy rest? Thy dwelling ought to be in heaven, and all earthly things are to be regarded as it were in passing by. All things pass away, and thou together with them. Beware thou adhere not to them, least thou be enthraled, and so dost perish. Let thy thought be on the highest, and thy prayers without ceasing directed unto Christ. If thou canst not contemplate high and heavenly things, rest thy self in the passion of Christ, and dwell willingly in the wounds of his sacred body. For if thou fly devoutly unto his holy wounds, and to the pretious marks of his passion, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation: Neither wilt thou much fear to be despised of men, but

100 *The following*

but wilt easily bear the words of
slandrous tongues.

5. Christ was also in the world
despised and in great necessity:
Forsaken by his acquaintance and
friends in the midst of slanders.
Christ would suffer, and be con-
temned, and darest thou com-
plain? Christ had adversaries and
backbiters; and wilt thou have
all men thy friends and benefac-
tors? For what shall thy pati-
ence be crowned, if no adversity
befal thee? If thou wilt suffer no
adversity. how wilt thou be the
friend of Christ? Suffer with
Christ, and for Christ, if thou
desirest to reign with Christ.

6. If thou hadst once perfectly
entred into the heart of *Jesus*,
and tasted a little of his burning
love, then wouldest thou not
weigh thy own commodity or dis-
commodity, but wouldest rather
rejoyce at slanders, when they
should chance to be cast upon
thee:



s of thee : For the love of *Jesus* makes
a man despise himself. A lover of
world *Jesus* and of Truth, and one interi-
ty : ourly recollected and free from in-
and ordinate affections, can freely turn
ers, himself unto God, and lift himself
n- above himself in spirit, and with
n- great joy of his soul rest in God.

7. He that judges of all things
as they are, and not as they are
said and esteemed to be, is truly
wise, and taught rather by God
than men. He that can live re-
collected within himself, and
make smal reckoning of outward
things, neither requires places,
nor attends times for performing
of devout exercises. A spiritual
man quickly recollects himself:
Because he never gives himself
wholly over to outward things.
He is not hindred by outward la-
bour or business, which may be
necessary for the time; but as
things fall out, so he frames him-
self unto them. He that hath well
ordered

ordered and disposed all things within, cares little for the vain inventions and perverse inclinations of men. A man is hindered and distracted by so much the more, as he doth ingross business to himself.

8. If all went well with thee, and thou hadst thy heart well purged, all things would fall out to thy good and profit. But many things displease, and often trouble thee, because thou art not yet perfectly dead unto thy self, nor free from the affection of earthly things. Nothing so defiles and intangles mans heart, as impure love to creatures. If thou refuse outward comfort, thou wilt be able to contemplate heavenly things, and often receive internal joy.

CHAP. II.

Of humble submission.

DO not much regard who is for thee, or against thee. Endeavour and take care that God may be for thee in every thing thou doest. Have a good conscience, and God will defend thee. For whom God will help, no malice of man can hurt. If thou canst hold thy peace and suffer, without doubt thou shalt see that our Lord will help thee. He knows the time and manner how to deliver thee, and therefore thou oughtest to resign thy self to him. It belongs to God to help, and to deliver from all shame. Oftentimes it is very profitable, for the better keeping of humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When

2. When a man humbles himself for his faults, then he easily pacifies others, and quickly satisfieth those that are offended with him. God protects and delivers the humble : He loves and comforts the humble : He inclines himself to the humble : He gives great grace to the humble , and after his humiliation he raiseth him unto glory. He reveals his secrets to the humble, and sweetly draws and invites him unto himself. The humble man when he hath received confusion, is in peace, because he resteth in God, and relies not on the world. Do not think thou hast profited any thing, unless thou esteem thy self inferiour to all.

CHAP. III.

Of a good and peaceable man.

First keep thy self in peace, and then thou maist pacify others

thers. A peaceable man doth more good, than he that is very learned. A passionate man turns even good into evil, and easily believes evil worst. A good peaceable man turns all things into good. He that is truly peaceable, is not suspicious of any; but he that is discontented, and troubled, is tossed with divers suspicions: he is neither quiet himself, nor suffers others to be quiet. He often speaks that which he ought not to speak, and omits that which were more expedient for him to do. He considers what others are bound to do, and neglects that which he is bound unto himself. First therefore have a careful zeal over thy self; and then thou maist justly shew thy self zealous of thy neighbours good.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse and colour thy own deeds, and thou wilt not receive

the excuses of others. It were more fit, that thou shouldest accuse thy self, and excuse thy brother. If thou wilt be born withal, bear also with another. Behold how far off thou art as yet from true charity and humility, which knows not how to be angry with any, or to be moved with indignation, but only against himself. It is no great matter to converse with the good, and those that are of a gentle disposition, for that is naturally pleasing unto all, and every one willingly enjoys peace, and loves those best that agree with him. But to be able to live peaceably with the unquiet, and perverse minds, or with the disorderly, or such as contradict us, is a great grace, very commendable, and a manful act,

3. Some there are that keep themselves in peace, and are in peace also with others. And there

are

are some, that neither are in peace themselves, nor suffer others to be in peace: They are troublesome to others but always more troublesome to themselves. And others there are that keep themselves in peace, and labour to bring others unto peace. But all our peace in this miserable life, consists rather in humble suffering, than in not feeling adversities. He that can best tell how to suffer will best keep himself in peace. He is a conquerour of himself, Lord of the world, a friend of Christ, and heir of heaven.

C H A P. IV.

*Of a pure mind, and upright
Intention.*

A Man is lifted up from earthly vanities by two wings; that is, with simplicity and Purity. Simplicity ought to be in

108 *The Following*

* our intention : purity in our affection. Simplicity aims at God : Purity apprehends and tastes his sweetness. No good action will hinder thee, if thou art inwardly free from inordinate affection. If thou intend, and seek nothing else but the true will of God, and the profit of thy neighbour, thou shalt enjoy internal liberty. If thy heart were sincere and upright, then every creature would be unto thee a looking glass of life and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so little and abject, that represents not the goodness of God.

2. If thou wert good and pure in thy own heart, then thou wouldest be able to see and understand all things without any impediment. A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell. Such as every one is inwardly ; so he judges outwardly. If there be a

ny

ny joy in the world, surely a man of a pure heart possesseth it : And if there be tribulation and affliction any where ; an evil conscience best knows it. As iron put into the fire loseth its rust, and becomes bright like fire ; so he that wholly turns himself unto God, becomes fervent, and is changed into a new man.

3. When one begins to wax cold, then he is afraid of a small labour and willingly receives external comfort. But when he once begins to overcome himself perfectly, and to walk manfully in the way of God, then he esteems those things light, which before seemed burdensome to him.

C H A P. V.

Of the consideration of ones self.

WE should not trust ourselves too much ; because

grace and understanding is often wanting. There is but little light in us, and that which we have, we quickly lose by our negligence, and oftentimes we do not perceive our own inward blindness. We are sometimes moved with passion, and we think it to be zeal. We reprehend small things in others, and pass over greater in our selves. We quickly feel and weigh what we suffer at the hands of others: But we mind not what others suffer from us. He that doth well and deeply considers his own works, will find little cause to judge hardly of another.

2. A recollected man prefers the care of himself, before all other cares: And he that diligently attends to himself, doth seldom speak much of others. Thou wilt never be recollected and devout, unless thou pass over other mens affairs with silence,
and

and look especially to thy self. If thou attend unto God and thy self, thou wilt be little moved with whatsoever thou seest abroad. Where art thou, when thou art not with thy self? And when thou hast run over all, what hast thou profited, if thou dost neglect thy self? If thou desirest peace of mind and true union, thou must put all behind thee, and only place thy self before thy eyes.

3. Thou shalt therefore profit much, if thou keep thy self free from all temporal cares. Thou shalt hinder thy self greatly, if thou esteem any thing of this world. Let nothing be great unto thee, nothing high, nothing grateful, nothing acceptable, but purely God himself, or that which is for God. Esteem all comfort vain, which thou receivest from any creature. A soul that loves God, despiseth all things

112 *The Following*

which are inferiour to God. God alone is everlasting, and of infinite greatness, filling all creatures: The comfort of the soul, and the true joy of the heart.

C H A P. VI.

Of the comfort of a good conscience.

THe glory of a good man, is the testimony of a good conscience. Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy. A good conscience is able to bear much, and is cheerful in adversities. An evil conscience is always fearful and unquiet. Thou shalt rest sweetly, if thy heart doth not reprehend thee. Never rejoyce, but when thou hast done well. Sinners have never true mirth, nor feel inward peace: Because there is no peace to the impious, saith our Lord. And if they say ;
we

we are in peace, no evil shall fall upon us, and who shall dare to hurt us, believe them not: For the wrath of God will rise upon a suddain, and their deeds shall be turned into nothing, and their thoughts shall perish.

2. To glory in tribulation, is no hard thing for him that loves: for to glory so, is to glory in the cross of our Lord. That glory is short, which is given and received from men. Sorrow always accompanies the glory of the world. The glory of the good is in their consciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladness of the just is of God: And in God: And their joy is of the truth. He that desires true and everlasting glory, cares not for that which passes away with time. And he that seeks temporal glory, or contemns it not from his heart, shews that he hath but little esteem of the glory of
G 5 heaven.

114 *The following*

heaven. He enjoyes great tranquillity and peace of mind, that cares neither for the praises, nor dispraises of men.

3. He will easily be content and pacified, whose conscience is pure. He is not the more holy, though thou commend him; nor the more abject though thou dispraise him. What thou art, that thou art: Neither canst thou be truly said to be greater, than what thou art in the sight of God. If thou consider what thou art within thee, thou wilt not care what men say of thee. Man seeth in the face, but God looketh into the heart. Man considereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intention. To do always well, and to esteem little of himself, is a token of an humble mind. To refuse to be comforted by any creature, is a sign of great purity, and inward confidence.

4. He that seeketh no outward witness

witness for himself, doth shew that he hath wholly committed himself unto God. For not he that commendeth himself, the same is approved (saith S. Paul) but whom God commendeth. To walk inwardly with God, and not to be possessed with any outward affection, is the state of an inward and spiritual man.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Love of Jesus above all things.

Blessed is he that understandeth what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for Jesus. Thou oughtest to leave thy beloved, for thy beloved; because Jesus will be beloved alone above all things. The love of created things is deceitful and unconstant: The love of Jesus is faithful

G 6 ful

116 *The following*

ful and constant. He that adheres unto creatures, shall fall with that which is subject to fall: He that embraceth *Jesus*, shall stand firmly for ever. Love him, and keep him for thy friend, who, when all go away, will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish in the end. Thou must once be forsaken of men, whether thou wilt or no.

2. Live and dye with *Jesus*; and commit thy self to his trust, who alone, when all fail, can help thee. Thy beloved is of that nature, that he will have none of that which appertains to others; but will have thy heart alone, and sit like a King in his own throne. If thou couldest purge thy self perfectly of all creatures, *Jesus* would willingly dwell with thee. Whatsoever trust thou reposest in men, out of *Jesus*, is all no better than lost. Trust not, nor rely upon a reed full of wind:

Wind : Because all Flesh is
as Hay, and all the glory thereof
of shall wither away, as the Flower
of the Field. 3. Thou shalt quickly be
deceived, if thou look only to
the outward shew of Men. And
if thou seekest thy comfort and
profit in them, thou shalt often
feel loss. If thou seekest Jesus
in all things, thou shalt surely
find Jesus. But if thou seekest
thy self, thou shalt also find thy
self, but to thy own harm. For
Man doth more hurt himself, if
he seek not Jesus, than the whole
World and all his Adversaries
could annoy him.

CHAP. VIII.

Of familiar friendship with Jesus.

WHEN Jesus is present, all is
well, and nothing seems
difficult : But when Jesus
is

Mr & The Following

is absent, every thing is hard. When Jesus speaks not inwardly unto us, our comfort is nothing worth: But if Jesus speak but one word, we feel much consolation. Did not *Mary Magdalen* presently rise from the place where she wept, when *Martha* said unto her: Thy Master is here, and calls for thee. Happy is the hour, when Jesus calls from Tears to spiritual Joy. How dry and hard thou art without Jesus? How foolish and vain, if thou desirest any thing out of Jesus? Is not this a greater loss, than if thou shouldst lose the whole World?

2. What can the World profit thee without Jesus? To be without Jesus is a grievous Hell; and to be with Jesus is a sweet paradise. If Jesus be with thee, no Enemy can hurt thee. He that finds Jesus, finds a good Treasure: Yea, a good above all goods.

And

of Christ. Lib. II. 119

And he that loseth Jesus, loses too much, and more than the whole World. He is most poor, that lives without Jesus; and the most rich that stands in his favour.

3. It is a great skill to know how to converse with Jesus; And a great wisdom to know how to keep Jesus. Be humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee. Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will stand with thee. Thus maist drive away Jesus, and lose his grace, if thou givest thy self to outward things. And if thou shouldest drive him from thee, and lose him, to whom wilt thou flee, and what friend wilt thou then seek? Thou canst not live well without a friend, and if Jesus be not above all a friend to thee, thou shalt be too sorrowful and desolate. Thou dost therefore foolishly, if thou dost trust or rejoyce in any other. It is better

120 The Following

ter for thee to have all the World
againſt thee, than Jeſus offend
with thee. Amongſt all things
therefore that be dear unto thee,
let Jeſus alone be thy chiefſt be-
loved.

4. Love all for Jeſus, but Je-
ſus for himſelf. Jeſus Chriſt
alone is eſpecially to be beloved;
who alone is found to be good,
and faithful above all friends.
For him and in him, let all friends
and foes be dear unto thee: And
all theſe are to be Prayed for,
that all may know and love him.
Never deſire to be ſingularly com-
mended or beloved, for that ap-
pertains only to God, who hath
none like unto himſelf. Neither
do thou deſire that the Heart of
any ſhould be ſet on thee, nor
do thou ſet thy Heart on the love
of any: But let Jeſus be in thee,
and in every good Man.

5. Be pure and free within,
and intangle not thy Heart with
any

any Creature. Thou oughtest to be as it were naked, and carry a pure Heart to God, if thou wilt consider, and prove, and see how sweet our Lord is. And truly, unless thou be prevented, and drawn by his grace, thou shalt never attain unto that happiness, to forsake and cast away all, that thou alone maist be united to him alone. For when the grace of God cometh unto a Man, then he is strong, and nothing is hard to him. And when it goes away, he is poor and weak, and left as it were unto the will of whosoever will afflict him. In this thou oughtest not to be dejected, nor despair: But to resign thy self with all indifferency unto the will of God, and to bear all things that befall thee, for the glory of Christ: For after Winter follows Summer, after Night comes Day, and after a Tempest fair Weather.

C H A P. IX.

Of the want of all Comfort.

IT is no great matter to despise Humane comfort, when we have Divine. It is much and very much, to be able to want both Humane and Divine comfort: And for the Honour and Glory of God, to be willing to endure desolation of Heart; and to seek himself in nothing, nor to regard his own merit. What great matter is it if thou be cheerful and devout at the coming of Heavenly Grace? This hour is wished for of all Men. He Rides easily, whom the Grace of God carries. And what wonder, if he feel not his burden, who is born up by the Almighty, and led by the greatest guide.

2. We are always willing to have

have something for our comfort :
And a Man doth hardly put of
and forsake himself. The Holy
Martyr St. *Laurence*, overcame
the World with his Priest, because
he despised whatsoever seemed de-
lightsome in the World; and for
the love of Christ, he patiently
suffered the high Priest of God
St. *Sixtus* (whom he most loved)
to be taken from him. He over-
came therefore the love of Man
by the love of the Creator; and
he rather chose the Divine plea-
sure, than Humane comfort. See
thou also learn to forsake some
necessary thing, and a beloved
friend for the love of God. Be
not grieved when thou art for-
saken by a friend, knowing that
we all at length must be separa-
ted one from another.

3. A Man must Fight long and
with a constant mind, before he
get the Victory, and be able to
place his whole Heart in God.

When

224 *The following*

When a Man confides in himself, he easily slides unto Humane comfort: But a true lover of Christ, and a diligent follower of virtue, gives not himself to such comfort, nor seeks sensible sweeteners, but rather forcible exercises, and to sustain hard labours for Christ.

4. When therefore Spiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it thankfully; but know that it is the gift of God, and not any desert of thine. Be not puffed up, joy not too much, neither do thou presume vainly: But be rather the more humble for that Grace, and more wary and fearful of all thy actions: For that hour will pass away, and Temptation will succeed. When consolation is taken away from thee, despair not presently, but with humility and patience, attend the Heavenly visitation: For God is able to give thee again greater con-

aim consolation. This is not new,
e cor strange unto them, that have
Ch experience in the way of God:
ver for in the great Saints, there
co was oftentimes such kind of al-
the teration.

an 5. For which cause, one when
f he had Grace, said: I said in my
plenty, I will not be moved ever-
tu lastingly. But when this was
of gone from him, he adds what he
of found in himself, saying: Thou
turnedst thy face from me, and
I became troubled. Yet doth he
not despair in the middest of
these changes but more earnestly
prayer to our Lord, and saith:
Unto thee (O Lord) I will cry,
and I will pray unto my God.
Lastly he receives the fruit of his
Prayer, and witnesseth that he
was heard, saying: Our Lord
hath heard me, and taken pittie
on me: Our Lord is become my
helper. But wherein? Thou hast
turned (saith he) my sorrow into
joy

126 The following

joy, and thou hast compassed about with gladness. If great Saints have been so dealt with we that are poor and weak, ought not to despair, if we be sometimes cold; for the spirit comes and goes, according to the good pleasure of his will. For which cause blessed *Job* saith: Thou visitest him early in the morning and suddenly thou provest him.

6. On what therefore can I hope, or wherein ought I to trust, but in the great mercy of God alone, and in the only hope of heavenly grace? For whether I enjoy the presence of good men, or devout brethren, or faithful friends, or holy books, or learned treatises, or sweet songs, and hymns, all help little and have little favour, when grace forsakes me, and I remain left in my own poverty. At such a time there is no better remedy then patience and the resigning of my self unto the will of God.

7. I never found any so religious and devout, that hath not had sometimes a withdrawing of grace, or felt not a decrease of fervour. There was never Saint so highly rapt, and illuminated, who first or last was not tempted. For he is not worthy of the high contemplation of God, who hath not been exercised with some tribulation for Gods sake. Temptation going before, is wont to be a sign of ensuing comfort. And unto those that are proved by temptations, heavenly comfort is promised. He that shall overcome, saith he, I will give him to eat of the Bread of life.

8. But divine comfort is given, that a man may be stronger to bear adversities. There follows also temptation, least we should wax proud of that good. The devil sleeps not, neither is our flesh as yet dead; therefore cease not to prepare thy self to the

128 *The following*

the battle : For on thy right hand,
and on thy left are enemies that
never rest.

CHAP. X.

*Of Thankfulness for the Grace
of God.*

WHy seekest thou rest, since
thou art born to labour?
Dispose thy self to patience, ra-
ther than to comforts : And to
the bearing of the cross, rather
than to gladness. What secular
person is there, that would not
willingly receive spiritual joy and
comfort, if he could always have
it? Spiritual comforts exceed all
the delights of the world, and all
the pleasures of the flesh. All
wordly delights are either vain or
unclean : But spiritual delights
are pleasant and honest, produced
by vertues, and infused by God
into

into pure hearts. But no man can always enjoy these divine comforts, according to his desire: For the time of temptation is not long away.

2. False freedom of mind, and great trust of our selves, is very contrary to heavenly visitations. God doth well in giving grace: But man doth evil in not returning it again wholly unto God with thanksgiving. And therefore the gifts of grace cannot flow in us, because we are ungrateful to the giver; and return them not wholly to the head fountain. For grace is ever due to him that is thankful, and that shall be taken from the proud which is wont to be given to the humble.

3. I desire not that consolation, which takes from me compunction: Nor that contemplation, which breeds a haughty mind. For all which is high is not holy, nor all that is sweet, good; nor every
H desier,

desire, pure; nor is every thing that is dear unto us, grateful to God. I do willingly accept of that grace whereby I may ever become more humble and fearful, and be made more ready and able to forsake my self. He that is taught by the gift of grace, and by the scourge of the withdrawing thereof, will not dare to attribute any good to himself; but will rather acknowledge himself poor & naked. Give unto God, that which is God's, and ascribe unto thy self, that which is thy own: That is, give thanks unto God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is to be attributed to thee, but only sin, and the punishment due thereunto.

4. Content thy self always with the meanest and lowest things, and the highest shall be given thee: For the highest stand not without the lowest. The highest Saints before God, are the least

least in their own judgments, And how much the more glorious, so much the humbler within themselves. Those that are full of truth, and heavenly glory, are not desirous of the vain glory of this world. Those that are firmly settled and grounded in God, can no way be proud. And they that ascribe all unto God, whatsoever good they have received, seek not glory one of another; but would have that glory which is from God alone, and desire above all things to praise God in himself, and in all the Saints, and always tend unto the same.

5. Be therefore grateful for the least gift, and thou shalt be made worthy to receive greater. Let the least be unto thee also, as the greatest: And the most contemptible as an especial gift. If thou consider the worth of the giver, no gift will seem little, or of mean esteem. For it is not little that

is given by the Sovereign Majesty of God; yea, if he should give punishment and stripes, it ought to be grateful, because he always doth it for our salvation, whatsoever he permits to happen unto us. He that desires to keep the grace of God, let him be thankful for the grace given: And patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may return. Let him be wary and humble; least he loose it.

CHAP. XI.

*How few the Lovers of the cross
of Christ are.*

JESUS hath now many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of his cross. He hath many desirous of comfort, but few of tribulation. He finds many companions of his table, but few

few of his abstinence. All desire to rejoyce with him, few will suffer any thing for him, or with him. Many follow Jesus unto the breaking of bread ; but few to the drinking of the chalice of his passion. Many reverence his miracles, few follow the ignominy of his cross. Many praise and bless him, as long as they receive any comfort from him : But if Jesus hide himself, and leave them but a while, they fall either into complaint, or into too much dejection of mind.

2. But they that love Jesus for Jesus, and not for some comfort of their own, bless him in all tribulation, and anguish of heart, as well as in the greatest comfort. And tho he should never give them comfort, they notwithstanding would ever praise him, and always give him thanks.

3. Oh ! how powerful is the pure love of Jesus, which is mixed

134 *The following*

with no self-love nor proper interest? Are they not all to be called hirelings, that ever seek comforts? Do they not shew themselves to be rather lovers of themselves, than of Christ, that always think of their commodity and gain? Where may one be found that will serve God without looking for reward?

4. It is hard to find any one so spiritual, that is free from the love of all earthly things. For where is any one that is truly poor in spirit, and free from all affection of creatures? Far hence, and from the end of the world is his price. If a man should give all his wealth, yet is it nothing; and if he should do great penance, yet it is little: And if he should attain unto all knowledge, he is yet far off: And if he should have great vertue, and very fervent devotion, yet there is much wanting, to wit, one thing, which

is most necessary for him. What is that? That leaving all, he forsake himself, and go wholly from himself, and retain nothing of self-love. And when he hath done all that he knows to be done, let him think that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not weigh that much, which might be much esteemed, but according to truth let him affirm himself to be an unprofitable servant, as our Saviour hath said: When you shall have done all things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants. They may be truly poor in spirit and naked, and say with the prophet: I am alone, and poor; yet no man richer, no man more powerful; no man more free, than he that can leave himself in the meanest and lowest place.

CHAP. XII.

Of the high way of the holy Cross.

THis speech seems hard to many: Deny thy self, take up thy Cross, and follow Jesus. But it will be much harder, to hear that last word: Go ye away from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. For they that now willingly hear and follow the word of the Cross, shall not then fear to hear the sentence of everlasting damnation. This sign of the Cross shall be in Heaven, when our Lord shall come to judgment. Then all the servants of the Cross, who in their life time conformed themselves unto Christ crucified, shall draw near unto our Lord with great confidence.

2. Why therefore fearest thou

to

to take up the Cross, which leads thee to a kingdom? In the Cross is health, in the Cross is life, in the Cross is protection against our enemies, in the Cross is infusion of Heavenly sweetness, in the Cross is strength of mind, in the Cross is joy of spirit, in the Cross is height of vertue, in the Cross is the perfection of Sanctity. There is no health of the soul, nor hope of everlasting life but in the Cross. Take up therefore thy Cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He is gone before bearing his Cross, and is dead for thee on the Cross, that thou maist also bear thy Cross, and desire to dye on the Cross with him. For if thou diest with him, thou shalt also live with him; and if thou be his companion in pain, thou shalt be partaker with him also in glory.

3. Behold, all consists in the Cross, and all lies in ending our

H 5 lives

138 *The following*

lives upon it: For there is no other way unto life, and unto true inward peace, but the way of the holy Cross, and of dayly mortification. Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy Cross. Dispose and order all things according to thy will, and judgment; yet thou shalt ever find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly or against thy will, so as thou shalt find pain in thy body, or in thy soul tribulation of spirit.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, sometimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbours; and which is more, oftentimes thou shalt be irksome to thy self, neither canst thou be delivered, or eased by any remedy or comfort: But so as it pleaseth God, thou oughtest to bear

no bear it; for God will have thee
tr learn to suffer tribulation without
f th comfort: And that thou submit
or thy self wholly to him, and be-
ilt come more humble by tribulation.
ho No man hath so lively a feeling of
ve the passion of Christ, as he, who
th hath chanced to suffer the like.
of The Cross therefore is always
to ready, and attends thee every
on where. Thou canst not escape it,
y whithersoever thou flyest: For
er wheresoever thou goest, thou car-
o riest thy self with thee, and shalt
ever find thy self both above and
below, without and within; which
way soever thou dost turn thee,
thou shalt still find the Cross; and
every where thou must of ne-
cessity have patience, if thou wilt
have inward peace, and deserve
an everlasting crown.

5. If thou bear the Cross wil-
lingly, it will bear thee, and lead
thee to thy desired end: To wit,
where there shall be an end of

140 *The following*

suffering, though here there shall not. If thou bear it unwillingly, thou makest for thy self a new burden, and increasest thy load, and yet notwithstanding thou must bear it. If thou cast away one Cross, without doubt thou shalt find another, and that perhaps a more heavy one.

6. Canst thou think to escape that, which no man could ever yet avoid? which of the Saints was without Crosses in this world, and tribulations? Verily Jesus-Christ our Lord was never one hour without pain of suffering, so long as he lived. Christ (saith he) must suffer, and rise again from death, and so enter into his glory; and how dost thou seek any other way, then this high way, which is the way of the holy Cross?

7. The whole life of Christ was a Cross and martyrdom: And dost thou seek rest and joy? Thou art decieved, thou art decieved if thou

thou seekest any other thing than to suffer tribulation : for this whole mortal life is full of miseries, and environed on every side with Crosses : And how much the more one hath profited in spirit, so much the heavier Crosses he oftentimes finds ; for the love he bears to God, increases the grief which he endures for his banishment.

8. But yet this man, though so many ways afflicted , is not without the remedy of spiritual consolation , for the great good which he perceives to grow unto him by the bearing of his Cross. For whilst he willingly puts himself under it, all the burden of tribulation is turned into the confidence of divine comfort. And how much the more the flesh is wasted by affliction, so much the more is the spirit strengthened by inward grace : And sometimes he is so comforted with the

142 *The following*

the desire of tribulation, and adversity, for the love of conforming himself to the Cross of Christ, that he would not wish at any time to be without sorrow and tribulation; because he believes, that so much the more grateful he shall be unto God, by how much the more he can suffer for him. This is not a work of humane vertue, but it is the grace of Christ, that can and doth so much in frail flesh: that which naturally it always abhors and flyes, that by fervour of spirit it takes hold on and loves.

9. It is not according to mans inclination to bear the Cross, to love the Cross, to chastise and subdue the body, to fly honours, to suffer contumelies with a joyful heart, to despise himself, and to wish to be despised, to bear all adversities and damages, and to desire no prosperity in this world. If thou considerest thy self, thou shalt

thalt be able to perform no such matter of thy self. But if thou trustest in our Lord, strength shall be given thee from heaven, and the world and flesh shall be made subject to thy command. Neither shalt thou fear thy enemy, the devil, if thou be armed with faith, and signed with the Cross of Christ.

10. Resolve therefore with thy self, like a good and faithful servant of Christ, to bear manfully the Cross of thy Lord, who was crucified for thy love. Prepare thy self to bear many adversities and divers kinds of troubles in this miserable life: For so it will be with thee, wheresoever thou be: And so surely thou wilt find it, wheresoever thou hide thy self. So it must be, and there is no remedy, or means to avoid tribulation and sorrow, but to bear them. Drink of the chalice of our Lord willingly, if thou wilt

144 *The following*

wilt be his friend, and desirest to have part with him. Leave the desire of comforts to God ; let him do therein as shall best please him. Set thou thy heart upon the suffering of tribulations. and account them the greatest comforts, because the passions of this life are not condigne to future glory, although thou alone couldest suffer them all.

11. When thou shalt come to this estate, that tribulation shall seem sweet and pleasant unto thee for Christ, then thou maist think it is well with thee ; for thou hast found a Paradise upon earth. As long as it is grievous unto thee to suffer, and that thou desirest to fly it, so long shalt thou be in a case ; and the tribulation thou flyest will follow thee every where.

12. If thou settlest thy self to what thou oughtest, to wit, to suffer and to dye to thy self, it will soon be better with thee, and
thou

to the let ase he co- rs, re- t
thou shalt find peace. Although thou shouldest have been rapt even unto the third heaven with *S. Paul*, thou art not assured for this, that thou shalt suffer no contradiction. I will shew him (saith Jesus) how great things he must suffer for my name. It remains therefore that thou suffer, if thou wilt love Jesus, and perpetually serve him.

13. Oh, would to God, thou wert worthy to suffer something for Jesus! How great glory would it be for thee, what joy to all the Saints of God, how great edification also to thy neighbour! For all do commend patience, though few desire to suffer. With great reason thou oughtest to be willing to suffer a little for Christ, since many suffer far greater things for the love of the world.

14. Know for certain, that thou oughtest to lead a dying life: And how much the more e-
very

very one dyes to himself, so much the more doth he begin to live to God. No man is fit to attain unto heavenly things, unless he submit himself to the bearing of adversities for Christ. Nothing is more grateful to God, nothing more wholesome to thee in this world, than to suffer willingly for Christ. And if it were in thy choice, thou shouldest rather wish to suffer adversities for Christ, than to enjoy the delight of many comforts: Because by these means thou shouldest be more like unto Christ, and more conformable to all the Saints. For our merit and the perfection of our estate, doth not consist in much sweetness and comforts, but rather in suffering great afflictions and tribulations.

15. If there had been any better thing and more profitable for the health of man than suffering, surely Christ would have shewed

it by word, and example. But he plainly exhorted all the disciples that followed him, and all that desire to follow him, to the bearing of the Cross, and saith; If any will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me. So as when we have read and searched all, let this be the last conclusion: that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations.

The End of the Second Book.

OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

The Third Book.

CHAP. I.

*Of the inward Speech of Christ
unto a Faithful Soul.*

I Will hear what our Lord
God will speak in me. Bles-
sed is the Soul that heareth
our Lord speaking in her; and

re-

receiveth from his Mouth the word of comfort. Blessed are those Ears, that receive the sound of the Voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the World. Blessed indeed are those Ears, which harken not to the Voice, which soundeth outwardly, but unto Truth, which teacheth inwardly. Blessed are the Eyes, that being shut up to outward things, are attentive to those things which are internal. Blessed are they, that enter into the inward things, and endeavour to prepare themselves more and more, by daily exercises, to the attaining of Heavenly secrets. Blessed, are they that delight to attend to the Service of God, and cast from them all impediments of this World.

2. Consider these things, my Soul, and shut up the door of thy sensual desires; that thou maist hear what thy Lord God speaks in thee. Thus saith thy
Be-

150 The following

Beloved. I am thy Safety, thy thy
Peace, and thy Life. Keep thy thy
self with me and thou shalt find the
Peace. Forfake all transitory
things, and seek those which are
everlasting. What are tempo-
ral things, but deceiving Snares!
And what do all Creatures avail
thee, if thou be forsaken by the
Creator? Forfake therefore all
Earthly things, and Labour to
please thy Creator, and be Faith-
ful unto him, that thou mayst
attain unto true Happiness.

CHAP. II.

*That Truth speaketh inwardly
without noise of words.*

Speak Lord, for thy Servant
heareth. I am thy Servant;
grant me understanding, that I
may know thy Testimonies. Stir
up my Heart to hear the words
of

of Christ. Lib. III. 151

thy Mouth. Let thy speech
ascend like the Dew into my Soul.
The Children of *Israel* in times
past said unto *Moses* : Speak thou
to us and we will hear thee : Let
not our Lord speak to us, least
perhaps we die. Not so Lord, not
so I beseech thee ; but rather with
the Prophet *Samuel* , I humbly
and earnestly intreat : Speak Lord,
for thy Servant hears. Let not
Moses speak unto me, nor any of
the Prophets , but do thou ra-
ther speak , my Lord God, the
inspirer and inlightner of all the
Prophets : For thou alone with-
out them, canst perfectly instruct
me, but they without thee, can
profit nothing.

2. They can pronounce words,
but they give not Spirit. They
speak very well, but if thou hold
thy peace, they inflame not the
Heart. They deliver the Letters,
but thou openest the Sense. They
bring forth Mysteries, but thou
dis-

152 *The following*

discloseth the understanding of them. They declare thy Commandments, but thou helpest to fullfil them. They shew the way, but thou givest strength to walk in it. They work only exteriorly, but thou instructest and enlightenest the Hearts. They Water outwardly, but thou givest Fruitfulness. They sound forth words, but thou givest understanding to the hearing.

3. Let not therefore *Moses* speak unto me, but thou my Lord God, the Everlasting Truth, least perhaps I should die, and become without Fruit, if I be warmed only outwardly, and not inflamed within; least the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed, should increase my judgment. Speak therefore, Lord, for thy Servant hears: Thou hast the words of Everlasting Life. Speak to the comfort of my Soul,
and

and to the amendment of my whole life ; and to thy Praise and Glory , and Everlasting Honour.

C H A P. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

SOn, hear my words , words of great comfort, excelling all the knowledge of Philosophers, and wise Men of this World. My words are Spirit and Life, not to be weighed by the understanding of Man. They are not to be drawn to vain and great affection. And I said : Blessed is the Man whom thou shalt instruct O Lord, and shalt teach thy Law, that thou maist give him quietness from evil Days, and that he be not abandoned upon Earth.

2. I have taught (saith our
I Lord)

154 *The following*

Lord) the Prophets from the beginning, and cease not continually to speak to every one : But many are Deaf, and give no Ear to my Speech. The greater number do more willingly listen to the World, than to God ; and sooner follow the desires of their Flesh than the will of God. The World promises Temporal and Small things, and is Served with great diligence : I promise most High and Eternal things, and the Hearts of Men are nothing moved with it. Who is he that Serves and Obeys with equal care to that which the World and the Lords thereof are Served? Blush *Sidon*, saith the Sea : And if thou ask the cause, hear wherefore. For a little Prebend, a long Journey is undertaken : For Everlasting Life many will scarce once lift up a Foot from the Ground. A thing of small value is sought after greedily : For a Penny sometimes

times there is great contention :
For a vain thing and slight promise,
Men cease not to toil Day
and Night.

3 But alas, for an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and glory without end, they are loth to take the least pains. Blush therefore sloathful and complaining Servant, that they are found more ready to destruction, than thou to life. They rejoyce more at Vanity, than thou at truth. And yet they are sometimes frustrated of their hope : But my promise deceives none, nor sends him away empty that trusts in me. I will give that which I have promised: I will fulfil that which I have said; but to him that remains Faithful in my Love to the end. I am the reward of all the good, and do try my Devout Servants in forcible proofs.

4. Write my words in thy
I 2 Heart,

156 *The Following*

Heart, and think diligently of them, for they will be necessary in time of Temptation. What thou understandest not when thou readeſt, thou ſhalt know in the day of viſitation. I am wont to viſit my Elect two ſeveral ways, to wit, with Temptation and Comfort. And I daily read two leſſons unto them, one reprehending their Vices, another exhorting them to the increaſe of vertues. He that hath my words and deſpiſes them, hath within himſelf that which ſhall Judge him at the laſt day.

A Prayer to implore the grace of Devotion.

5. Lord my God, thou art all that I can deſire. Who am I that dare ſpeak unto thee? I am thy pooreſt Servant, and a moſt vile Worm: much more poor and contemptible, than I can or dare expreſs

prefs. Remember Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing and can do nothing. Thou alone art just, good, and holy; thou canst do all things; thou performest all things, and replenishest all things, leaving only a sinner void of all good. Call to mind thy Mercies, and fill my Heart with thy Grace, thou who wilt not that thy works be without effect.

6. How can I support my self in this miserable life, unless thy Mercy and Grace comfort me? Turn not thy Face from me: Delay not thy visitation: Draw not away thy comfort, least my Soul become as Earth without Water to thee. Lord, teach me to fulfil thy will; teach me to live worthily and humbly in thy sight; for thou art my wisdom, thou dost perfectly know me, and didst know me before the World was made, and before I was born into the World.

C H A P. IV.

*That we ought to live in Truth and
Humility in the sight of God.*

SOn, walk in my sight in Truth;
and ever seek me in simplicity
of Heart. He that walks in
my sight in Truth, shall be de-
fended from evil incursions,
and truth shall deliver him from
Seducers, and from the detracti-
ons of the Wicked. If thou be
delivered by Truth, thou shalt
be truly free, and shalt not care
for the vain speeches of Men.
Lord, it is true, according as thou
sayest, so I beseech thee let it be
with me, and keep me, and bring
me to an happy end. Let thy
Truth teach me, and let it deliver
me from all evil affection and inor-
dinate love: And I shall walk with
thee in great freedom of Heart.

2. I will teach thee (faith Truth) those things that are right and pleasing in my sight. Think of thy sins with great sorrow and grief, and never esteem thy self any thing for thy good works. Thou art a sinner, and subject to many passions. Of thy self thou always tendest to nothing, and art quickly cast down and overcome; quickly troubled, quickly dissolved. Thou hast nothing wherein thou canst Glory, but many things for which thou oughtest to humble and despise thy self: For thou art much weaker, than thou art able to comprehend.

3. Let nothing therefore seem much to thee, whatsoever thou dost. Let nothing seem great, nothing pretious, and wonderful, nothing worthy of estimation, nothing high, nothing truly commendable, and to be desired, but that which is Everlasting. Let the Eternal Truth above all things

160 *The following*

please thee. Let thy own great unworthiness always displease thee. Fear nothing, blame and flie nothing so much, as thy sins and vices : Which ought to displease thee more, then the loss of any thing whatsoever. Some walk not sincerely in my sight, but led by a certain Curiosity and Pride, will know my Secrets, and understand the high Mysteries of God, neglecting themselves, and their own Salvation, These oftentimes (because I resist them) do fall into great Temptations and Sins, for their Pride and Curiosity.

4. Fear the judgment of God, dread the wrath of the Almighty : Discuss not the works of the Highest, but examine thy own Iniquities, in how much thou hast Offended, and how much good thou hast neglected. Some carry their Devotion only in Books, some in outward signs and figures; some have me in their Mouths,
but

but little in their hearts. There are others, who being illuminated in their understanding, and purged in their affection, do always aspire with an earnest mind to everlasting happiness: And are unwilling to hear of the things of this world, and do serve the necessities of nature with grief; and these perceive what the spirit of Truth speaks in them. Because it teacheth them to despise earthly and love heavenly things: To neglect the world, and day and night to desire heaven.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderful effect of divine Grace.

I Praise thee, Oh heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, for that thou hast vouchsafed to remember me a poor and
I s wretched

162. *The following*

wretched creature. O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, thanks be to thee, who refreshest me sometimes with thy comfort, tho unworthy of all comfort. I ever bless and glorify thee with thy holy Ghost for ever. O God my Lord, the holy lover of my soul, when thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoyce. Thou art my glory, and the exultation of my heart. Thou art my hope and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But because I am yet weak in love and imperfect in vertue, I have need to be comforted by thee. Visitt me therefore often, and instruct me with thy holy discipline: Deliver me from evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections; that being cured within, and well purged, I may be made fit to love, strong to suffer, and constant to persevere.

3. Love is a great matter, and

a great good; which alone maketh every thing that is heavy light, and beareth equally unequal burdens. For it carrieth a burden without a burden, and maketh every thing that is bitter, sweet and delightfome. The noble love of Jesus giveth man force to work great things, and stirreth him up to desire always the most perfect. Love will be above, and not kept down with any base thing. Love will be free from all wordly affection, to the end his inward fight may not be obscured, that he may not be intangled with the desire of any transitory gain, or troubled with the want thereof. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing more ample, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven or earth: Because love hath its beginning from God, and cannot rest but in God above all creatures.

364 *The following*

4. He that loveth, flyeth, runneth, and rejoyceth : He is free and not held in. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all, because he resteth in one Highest above all, from whom all good floweth and proceedeth. He respecteth not the gifts, but turneth himself above all goods to the giver. Love often times knoweth no measure, but inflameth above all measure. Love feeleth no burden, weigheth no pains, desireth above its strength, complaineth not of impossibility, because it thinks all things lawful and possible. It is therefore able to undertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to effect : Whereas he that doth not love, fainteth and can do nothing.

5. Love always watcheth, and sleeping sleepeth not : Being wearied, is not tired : Streightned is not pressed : Frighted is not troubled : But like a lively flame and
burning

burning torch, breaketh upwards, and passeth through all with great security. If any one loveth, he knows what this voice cryeth. The burning love of the soul is a loud cry in the ears of God, which saith; my God, my Love, thou art wholly mine, and I wholly thine.

6. Enlarge me in love, that my heart may tast, how sweet it is to love, and to be dissolved, and swim in thy love. Let me be possessed by love, mounting above my self, with excessive fervour and admiration. Let me follow thee on high my beloved, let my soul faint in thy praises rejoicing with love. Let me love thee more than my self, and not my self but for thee, and all in thee that truly love thee, as the law of love commands, which shines in thee.

7. Love is swift, sincere, pious, sweet and delightful: strong, patient, faithful, prudent, suffering, full of courage, and never seeking it

166 The Following

it self. For where one seeks himself, there he falls from love. Love is circumspect, humble and upright; not remiss, not mutable, nor attending to vain things: sober, chaste, constant, quiet, and guarded in all the senses. Love is subject and obedient to superiors, mean and abject to it self, devout and thankful to God, trusting and hoping always in him, even then when God imparts no sweetness unto it. For no man lives in love, without sorrow.

8. He that is not ready to suffer all things, and stand to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover ought to suffer all that is hard, and distastful, for his beloved; and not to turn away from him, for any contrary accidents.

CHAP

CHAP. VI

Of the proof of a true lover.

SOn, thou art not yet a strong and prudent Lover. Wherefore Lord? Because thou givest over for a small adversity, and too earnestly seekest comfort. A constant lover standeth firmly in temptations, and giveth not credit to the crafty persuasions of the enemy. As I please him in prosperity, so I am not unpleasant to him in adversity.

2. A prudent lover considereth not so much the gift of his lover, as the love of the giver. He rather esteemeth the good will, than the value, and placeth all gifts under his beloved. A noble lover resteth not in the gift, but in me above any gift. All therefore is not lost if some-
times

168 *The Following*

times thou hast less tast of me and my Saints, then thou wouldst. That good and sweet desire which thou sometimes feelest, is the effect of present grace, and a certain taste of the heavenly Country: Whereon thou must not rely too much, for it goeth and commeth. But to fight against evil motions of the mind, which may happen unto thee, and to depise the suggestion of the devil, is a sign of vertue and great merit.

3. Let not therefore strange fancies forced into thee, of any matter whatsoever, trouble thee. Retain a firm purpose, an upright intention to God. Neither is it an illusion that sometimes thou art suddainly rapt on high, and presently returnest again unto the accustomed vanities of thy heart. For thou dost rather unwillingly suffer them, than commit them: And as long as they displease thee,

thee, and thou strivest against them, it is a merit, and no loss.

4. Know that thy ancient enemy doth ever strive to hinder thy desire to good; and to divert thee from all devout exercise: To wit, from the worshiping of Saints, from the devout memory of my passion, from the profitable remembrance of thy sins, from the guard of thy own heart, and from the firm purpose of profiting in vertue. He thrusteth many evil thoughts into thy mind, that he may cause a wearisomness, and horreur in thee to draw thee from devout prayer and reading. Humble confession is displeasing unto him, and if he could, he would cause thee to cease from recieving the Sacrament of my Body. Trust him not, nor care for him, although he should often set snares of deceit to intrap thee. Charge him with it, when he suggesteth evil and unclean thoughts

thoughts unto thee. Say unto him: Avant filthy spirit, blush miserable wretch; thou art filthy that bringest such things unto my ears. Away from me wicked deceiver, thou shalt have no part in me: But Jesus shall be with me as a strong warriour, and thou shalt remain confounded. I had rather dye, and undergo any torment, than to consent unto thee. Hold thy peace and be silent; I will hear thee no more, though thou shouldest work me many troubles. My Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I fear? If whole armies should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. Our Lord is my helper and my redeemer.

5. Fight like a good soldier: And if thou sometimes fall through frailty, recover greater forces than before, trusting in my more abundant grace: And take great heed of vain pleasing of thy self, and

and pride. This brings many into error, and makes them sometimes fall into almost incurable blindness. Let the fall of the proud foolishly presuming of themselves, serve thee for a warning, and a perpetual humiliation.

CHAP. VII.

*That grace is to be hid under the
vail of humility.*

SOn, it is more profitable, and safe for thee to hide the grace of devotion, not to extol thy self, not to speak much, nor to esteem much thereof: But rather to despise thy self, and fear it, as given to one unworthy thereof. This affection is not to be cleaved unto, which may be quickly changed into the contrary. Think when thou art in grace, how miserable and needy thou art

172 *The following*

art wont to be without it. Neither doth therein only consist the profit of spiritual life, when thou hast the grace of comfort ; but when thou humbly, resignedly, and patiently sufferest the withdrawing thereof: So that thou be not then less diligent in the exercise of prayer, nor suffer thy self to pass over the rest of thy accustomed good works ; but that thou willingly perform what lieth in thee, according as thou art able and understandest to be fit: Not neglecting thy self wholly for the drieness and trouble of mind, which thou feelest.

2. There are many that when it succeedeth not well with them, presently they become impatient or slothful. The way of man is not always in his power, but it belongeth to God, to give, and to comfort when he will, how much he will, and whom he will, as it shall please him and no more.

Some

Some unadvised persons have overthrown themselves for the greedy desire which they had of the grace of devotion: Attempting more than they were able to perform, not weighing the measure of their weakness, but following rather the desire of their heart, than the judgment of reason. And because they presumed on greater matters than was pleasing to God, they quickly lost his grace. They were made needy, and left in a dejected estate, that built themselves nests in Heaven: To the end that being humbled, and impoverished, they may learn not to fly with their own wings, but to live in hope under my feathers. They that are yet new, and unacquainted in the way of our Lord, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons. May easily be deceived and overthrown.

3. And if they will rather follow

low their own judgment, that give credit to others that are experienced, their end will be dangerous, if they cannot be drawn from their own conceit. Seldom those that are wise in their own opinion, suffer themselves humbly to be governed by others. A little knowledge with humility, and a slender understanding, is better than great treasures of learning with a vain self-liking. It is better for thee to have less, than much of that whereof thou maist be proud. He doth not discreetly, that wholly giveth himself over to mirth, forgetting his former poverty, and the chaste fear of God, which feareth to lose the grace which he hath obtained. Neither is he vertuously wise, that in time of adversity or any tribulation whatsoever, yeildeth to despairing thoughts, and thinketh and imagineth of me less confidently than he ought.

4. He

4. He that will be over-secure in time of peace, shall be often found in time of war too dejected and fearful. If thou couldest always continue humble, and lowly within thy self, and temper, and govern thy soul well, thou shouldest not so soon fall into danger and offence. It is good counsel, that when thou conceivest fervour of spirit, thou shouldest think what will become of thee, when that light shall leave thee. And when that doth happen, remember the light may return again, which for thy instruction and my glory I have withdrawn for a time.

5 Such Proof is often more profitable, than if thou shouldest always enjoy prosperity according to thy desire. For merits are not to be weighed in a man by the number of visions and comforts, which he hath, or by his knowledge in Scriptures, or by
his

176 *The following.*

his being placed in high degree, but in that he is grounded in true humility, and replenished with divine charity : If he always purely and entirely seek the honour of God, if he esteem himself nothing, and with sincere heart despise himself, and rejoyce more to be despised and humbled by others, than to be honoured.

CHAP. VIII.

Of a mean conceit of our selves, in the sight of God.

SHall I speak unto my Lord ; since I am dust and ashes ? If I esteem better of my self, behold thou standest against me , and my iniquities bear true witness : Neither can I speak against it. But if I abase, and esteem nothing of my self, and cast off all self conceit, and (as I am) account

count my self to be dust, thy grace will be favourable unto me, and thy light will be neer unto my heart: and all estimation how little soever shall be swallowed up in the depth of my nothing, and perish everlastingly. There thou shewest my self unto me, what I am, what I have been, and whither I am come: For alas I am nothing, and I knew it not. And if I be left to my self, behold I become nothing, and a mass of infirmity: But if thou suddainly look upon me, I am presently made strong, and filled with new joy. And it is much, that I am so suddenly lifted up, and so graciously embraced by thee, that of my own weight, always sink downward.

2. Thy love is cause of this, freely preventing me, and relieving me in so many necessities, preserving me also from grievous dangers, and (as I may truly say)

K

deliver-

delivering me from innumerable evils. For surely by evil loving my self, I lost my self: And by seeking thee alone, and sincerely loving thee, I have found both my self and thee, and for thy love have more deeply brought my self to nothing. For that thou, O most sweet Jesu, dealest with me above all desert, and above all that I dare hope and request.

3. Blessed be thou my God; for although I be unworthy of all good, yet the nobleness of thy bounty and thy infinite goodness, never ceaseth to do good even to the ungrateful, and to them that be turned away far from thee. Turn us unto thee, O Lord, that we may be grateful, humble and devout: For thou art our safety, our power, and our strength.

C H A P. IX.

*That all things are to be referred
unto God, as unto the last end.*

SOn, I ought to be thy chiefest
and last end, if thou desirest
to be truly blessed. With this
intention thy affection shall be pu-
rified, which is oftentimes incli-
ned inordinately to it self, and un-
to creatures. For if in any thing
thou seek thy self, thou presently
faintest, and driest up within thy
self. Direct therefore all things
chiefly unto me, for I am he that
have given all. Consider every
thing as flowing from the high-
est good ; and therefore all things
are to be reduced unto me as un-
to their first beginning.

2. Out of me, as out of living
fountains, the little and the great,
the poor and the rich, do draw

the water of life: And they that willingly, and freely serve me, shall receive grace for grace. But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any particular good, shall not be grounded in true joy, nor enlarged in his heart, but shall be many ways hindred and straitned. Thou oughtest therefore to ascribe no good unto thy self, nor attribute the praise of vertue unto any man: But give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing. I have bestowed all, and will that all be returned to me again: And with great severity I require thanks.

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vain-glory. And if heavenly grace, and true charity enter in, there shall be no envy nor grudging of heart, neither shall there be any place for self-love. For divine charity overcometh all, and enlargeth all the forces of the soul. If thou understand

stand aright, in me alone thou wilt rejoyce, in me alone thou wilt hope: For none is good, but God alone, who is to be praised above all things, and to be blessed in all.

CHAP. VII.

That despising the world, it is sweet to serve God.

NOW I will speak again, O Lord, and will not be silent. I will say in the ears of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high: O how great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for those that fear thee! But what art thou to them, that love thee? What to them, that serve thee with their whole heart? Truly unspeakable is the sweetness of thy contemplation, which

K 3 thou

182 *The following*

thou bestowest on them that love thee. In this chiefly thou hast shewed me the sweetness of thy charity, for that, when I was not; thou madest me; and when I went astray far off from thee, thou broughtest me back again, that I might serve thee: And hast commanded me to love thee.

2. O Fountain of everlasting love, what shall I say of thee? How can I forget thee, that hast vouchsafed to remember me, even when I withered away and perished! Thou hast used mercy with thy servant, beyond all the expectation of my heart: And hast bestowed thy grace and friendship beyond all merit. What shall I return unto thee for this grace? For it is not granted to every one to forsake all things, to renounce the world, and to undertake a life of Religion and perfection. Is it much that I serve thee, whom all creatures are bound

bound to serve? It ought not to seem much unto me to serve thee: But this rather seemeth much, and marvelous unto me, that thou vouchsafest to recieve into thy service one so poor and unworthy, and to joyn him with thy beloved servants.

3. Behold all is thine which I have, and whereby I serve thee: And yet thou rather servest me than I thee. Behold Heaven and Earth, which thou hast Created for the service of man are ready at hand, and do dayly perform whatsoever thou dost command; and this is little: Yea thou hast also appointed the Angels to the service of man. But that which excelleth all, is, that thou thy self hast vouchsafed to serve man, and promised to give thy self unto him.

4. What shall I give thee for all these thousands of benefits? I would I could serve thee all the

184 *The Following*

days of my life ! I would I were able at least for one day, to do thee some worthy and acceptable service ! Thou art truly worthy of all service, of all Honour and everlasting praise. Thou art my Lord, and I thy poor servant, that am bound to serve thee with all my forces, neither ought I ever to cease to praise thee. And this I wish to do, this I desire : And whatsoever is wanting unto me, vouchsafe I beseech thee to supply.

5. It is a great Honour, a very great glory to serve thee, and despise all things for thee. For great grace shall be given to them, that shall willingly subject themselves unto thy most holy service. They shall receive most sweet comfort of the holy Ghost, that for thy love shall renounce all Carnal delights. They shall attain great freedome of mind, that for thy names sake shall enter in-
to

to the narrow way, and shall have left off all care of this world.

6. O sweet and delightful servitude of God, by which man is truly made free and Holy! O sacred state of Religious bondage, which maketh man equal to Angels, pleasing to God, terrible to Devils, and grateful, and of great esteem to all the faithful! O service to be embraced, and always wished for, by which we obtain the greatest good, and attain to that joy which never shall have end.

C H A P. XI.

That the desires of our heart are to be examined and moderated.

SOn, thou oughtest to learn many things more, which thou hast not yet well learned. What are those Lord? That

K 5

thou

186 *The following*

thou frame thy desires wholly according to my pleasure : And be not a lover of thy self, but a diligent follower of my will. Thy desires oftentimes do stir thee up, and drive thee forwards with violence. But consider whether thou art moved rather for my Honour, than for thy own profit. If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content with whatsoever I shall ordain : But if there lurk in thee any self inclination, behold this is it that hindreth thee, and weigheth thee down.

2. Beware therefore thou incline not too much unto any desire that cometh to thy mind, before thou ask my Counsel : Lest perhaps afterwards it repent thee, and that thou begin now to dislike that, which before did please thee, and which thou earnestly desirest as the best. For every affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed : Nor
every

every contrary affection at the first to be fled. It is expedient sometimes to use a restraint even in good desires and endeavours, lest by importunity thou incur distraction of mind, and by evil example become a scandal unto others: Or being gainsaid by others, thou be suddainly troubled and fall.

3. Yet sometimes thou oughtest to use violence, and resist manfully thy sensual appetites, and respect not what thy body would, or would not: But rather to labour, that even perforce it be subject to the spirit. And it is to be chastised so long, and to be forced under servitude, until it readily obey in all things, and learn to be content with a little, and to be pleased with ordinary things, and not to murmur against any inconvenience.

C H A P. XII.

*Of the effect of Patience, and of
strife against Concupiscence.*

LOrd God, I perceive Patience is very necessary for me: Because many adversities do happen in this Life. Howsoever I shall dispose of my peace, my life cannot be without War and Affliction. So it is Son. And my will is not, that thou seek after that peace which is void of Temptation, or that which feeleth no contrariety; but then think that thou hast found peace, when thou art exercised with sundry Tribulations, and tried in many Adversities.

2. If thou say that thou art not able to suffer much, how then wilt thou endure the Fire of Purgatory? Of two Evils the less is
al-

always to be chosen. That thou maist therefore avoid Everlasting punishment in the next World, endeavour to suffer patiently for God the present Evils of this. Doeſt thou think that Men of this World suffer little or nothing? Thou are deceived. Look into the Life even of them that live in greateſt delicacies, and thou ſhalt find it otherwiſe. But thou wilt ſay, they have many delights, and follow their own wills, and therefore they make ſmall account of their Tribulations. Be it ſo, that they have whatſoever they will; but how long doſt thou think it will laſt.

3. Behold the Wealthy of this World vaniſh away like Smoke, and there ſhall be no memory of their joys paſt. Yea, even while they live alſo, they reſt not in them without grief, irkſomeness, and fear, for the ſelf ſame thing in which they take their delight,
is

190 *The Following*

is oftentimes the cause of sorrow unto them and much affliction. They have their desert; who for that they immoderately seek and follow delights, they do not obtain them, but with shame and sorrow.

4. O how short and deceitful, how inordinate, and filthy are those pleasures! Yea, so senseless and blind are Men, that they understand it not: But like dumb Beasts, for a little pleasures of a corruptible Life, they incur the eternal death of their Soul. Do not thou therefore, my Son, follow the disordinate inclinations of thy corrupt Nature, but forsake thy own will. Delight in our Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thy Heart.

5. If thou desire true delight, and to be more plentifully comforted by me: behold, in the contempt of all Worldly things, and in the cutting off all base delights,
shall

shall be thy Blessings, and abundant comforts shall be given thee. And how much the more thou withdrawest thy self from all comfort of Creatures, so much the sweeter and more forcible consolations shalt thou find in me. But at First thou canst not attain unto them, without a certain grief, labour, and strife. The old custom will make resistance, and thou must overcome it with another custom that is better. Thy flesh will murmur: But thou must bridle it with fervour of Spirit. The old Serpent will sting and trouble thee: But by Prayer he shall be put to flight: And with profitable Labour thou shalt shut the Door against him.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the humble obedience of a Subject, according to the Example of Christ.

SOn, he that endeavoureth to withdraw himself from Obedience, withdraweth himself from Grace. And he that seeketh to have things in private, shall lose the common. He that doth not willingly and freely submit himself to his Superiour, it is a sign that his Flesh is not yet perfectly Obedient unto him, but oftentimes Rebelleth, and murmureth against him. Learn therefore readily to submit thy self to thy Superiour, if thou desirest to subdue thy own Passions. For the outward Enemy is sooner overcome, if the inward Man be in good estate. There is no worse
Enemy,

Enemy, nor more troublesome to the Soul, than thou unto thy self, nor agreeing well with the Spirit. Thou must of necessity have a true contempt of thy self, if thou wilt prevail against Flesh and Bloud.

2. Because thou lovest thy self as yet too inordinately, therefore thou art afraid to resign thy self wholly to the will of others. But what great matter is it, if thou that art dust, and nothing, submit thy self to a Man for God, when I the Almighty and Highest Sovereign, who Created all things of nothing, humbly submitted my self unto Man for thee? I became the most humble and abject of all Men, that thou mightest overcome thy pride with my humility. Learn to Obey thou that art dust. Learn to humble thy self thou Earth and Clay, and put thy self under the Feet of all Men. Learn to break thy own will, and

194 *The Following*

to yield thy self to all Subjection.

3. Take courage against thy self, and suffer not Pride to live in thee : But humble and submit thy self to all , that every one may go over thee, and tread thee as dirt of the streets under their Feet. Vain Man, what canst thou comp'ain of? What canst thou Answer, foul sinner, to them that reprove thee, who hast so often Offended God, and so many times deserved Hell? But my Eye hath spared thee , because thy Soul was pretious in my sight ; that thou mightest know my Love, and always remain grateful for my benefits : That thou mightest continually give thy self to true subjection and humility , and mightest bear patiently the contempt of thy self.

CHAP. XIV.

*Of the secret Judgments of God
to be considered, lest we be ex-
tolled in our good deeds.*

THou thunderest thy Judge-
ments over me, O Lord,
shakest all my Bones with fear
and trembling: My Soul is fore
afraid. I stand astonished, when
I consider that the Heavens are
not pure in thy sight. If thou
hast found wickedness in Angels,
and hast not Pardoned them,
what shall become of me? Stars
fell from Heaven, and what do I
presume that am but dust? They
whose works seem laudable, fell
into the lowest Hell: and I have
seen them, that did eat the Bread
of Angels, to be delighted with,
the husks of Swine.

2. There is no sanctity, if thou

○

196 *The following*

O Lord, withdrawest thy Hand
No wisdom availeth, if thou
ceapest to Govern. No strength
helpeth, if thou leavest to defend.
No chastity secure, if thou dost
not protect it. No custody of our
own profitable, if thy sacred
watchfullness be not present. For
if thou leavest us, we sink, and
perish; but if thou vouchsafest
to visit us, we are raised up, and
do enjoy life, we are inconstant,
but by thee we are strengthened:
We wax cold, but by thee we re-
ceive heat.

3. O how meanly and basely
ought I to think of my self! How
little, yea nothing ought I to
esteem it, if I seem to have any
good! O Lord, how ought I to
submit my self under thy un-
searcheable Judgements: Where I
find my self to be nothing else,
but nothing, and less than no-
thing. O unmeasurable Weight!
O Sea that can never be passed
over;

and
how
gth
nd
of
ur
ed
r
I
over; where I find my self only
and wholly nothing! Where then
is the lurking hole of Glory?
Where is the confidence conceiv-
ed of Vertue? All vain glory is
swallowed up in the depth of thy
Judgements, which hang over
my Head.

4. What is all Flesh in thy
sight? Shall Clay glory against
him that framed it? How can he
be lifted up with vain Words,
whose Heart is truly Subject to
God? All the World cannot move
him to any elation of mind, whom
truth hath subjected unto it;
neither shall he be moved with
the Tongues of all his praisers,
that hath settled his whole hope
in God. For they also that speak,
behold, are nothing: They shall
pass away with the sound of the
Words: But the Truth of our
Lord remaineth for ever.

C H A P. XV.

What we ought to do and say, in every thing which we desire.

SOn, say thus in every thing: Lord, if it be pleasing unto thee, let this be done in this sort. Lord, if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy Name. Lord, if thou seeest it expedient for me, and allowest it to be profitable, then grant unto me, that I may use this unto thy honour: But if thou knowest it will be hurtful unto me, and not profitable to the health of my Soul, take from me all such desire. For every desire proceedeth not from the Holy Ghost; though it seem unto Man right and good. It is hard to Judge whether a good Spirit, or the contrary drive thee to desire this or that: Or whether

ther also by thy own Spirit thou be moved thereunto. Many are deceived in the end, who at the first seemed to be led by a good Spirit.

2. Always therefore, whatsoever occurreth unto thy mind to be desired, let it be desired with the fear of God, and with humility of Heart: And above all thou oughtest to commit it unto me with full resignation of thy self: And thou oughtest to say, Lord thou knowest what is best, do this, or that, as thou pleasest. Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt. Do with me as thou knowest, and as best pleaseth thee, and is most for thy honour. Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things according to thy will. I am in thy Hand; turn me, and turn me again which way soever thou please. Behold I am thy Servant ready

200 *The Following*

to Obey thee in all things : For
I desire not to live unto my self,
but unto thee, And would to
God it might be in some wor-
thy and perfect manner.

*A Prayer for the fulfilling of the
will of God.*

3. Grant me thy Grace sweet
Jesus, that it may be with me,
and labour with me, and persevere
with me until the end. Grant
me always to desire and will that,
which is most acceptable unto
thee, and best pleaseth thee. Let
thy will be mine, and let my will
ever follow thine, and agree per-
fectly with it. Let my will and
nill be all one with thine: and
not to be able to will, or refuse
any thing else, but what thou
wilt, or rejectest.

4. Grant that I may die to all
things that are in the World, and
to love for thy sake to be con-
temned,



For remned and not to be known in
elf, this World. Grant that above
to all things that can be desired, I
r- may rest in thee, and make my
Heart to enjoy peace in thee. Thou
art the true peace of the Heart,
e thou art the only rest; out of
thee all things are troublesome
and unquiet. In peace, in the
self same; that is, in thee, one
chiefest, eternal good, I will sleep
and rest. *Amen.*

C H A P. XVI.

*That true comfort is to be sought
in God alone.*

WHATSOEVER I can desire, or
imagine for my comfort,
I look not for it in this life, but
hereafter. For if I should alone
have all the comforts of the
World, and might enjoy all the
delights thereof, it is certain that
L they

202 *The Following*

they could not long endure. Wherefore my Soul, thou canst not be fully comforted, nor have perfect delight but in God, the comforter of the poor, and the receiver of the humble. Expect a while my Soul, expect the Divine promise, and thou shalt have abundance of all good things in Heaven. If thou desire inordinately the things that are present, thou shalt loose the Celsstial and Eternal. Have temporal things in use, and the Eternal in desire. Thou canst not be filled with any Temporal goods, because thou art not Created to enjoy them.

2. Although thou enjoyest all that is Created, yet canst thou not be happy thereby nor blessed: But in God that hath Created all things, thy whole beatitude and happiness consisteth: Not such as is seen, and commended by the foolish lovers of the World; but such as the good faithful Servants of

of Christ. Lib. III. 203

of Christ expect, and the Spiritu-
al, and clean of Heart, whose
conversation is in Heaven, some-
times take a tast of. Vain and
short is all humane comfort. Bles-
sed and true is the comfort which
is received inwardly from Truth.
A devout Man every where carri-
eth with him Jesus his comforter,
and saith unto him: Be present
with me, Lord Jesus, in every place,
and time. Let this be my com-
fort to be always willing to want
all humane comfort. And if thy
comfort be wanting, let thy will
and just proof be unto me, as the
greatest comfort: For thou wilt
not be angry always, neither wilt
thou threaten for ever.

C H A P. XVII.

*That all our care is to be placed
in God*

SOn, suffer me to do with thee what I please. I know what is expedient for thee. Thou thinkest as Man: Thou judgest in many things as humane affection perswadeth thee. Lord, what thou saist is true. Thy solicitude for me is greater, than all the care that I can take for my self. For he standeth at too great a hazard, that casteth not his whole care upon thee. Lord, so that my will may remain right and firm in thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please thee. For it cannot be but good, whatsoever thou doest with me.

2. If it be thy will I should be in Darkness, be thou blessed:
And

of Christ. Lib. III. 205

And if it be thy will I should be in Light, be thou again blessed. If thou vouchsafest to comfort me, be thou blessed: And if thou wilt afflict me, be thou also ever blessed. Son, so thou oughtest to be, as ready to suffer, as to receive joy. Thou oughtest to be as willing to be poor and needy, as plentiful and rich.

3. Lord, I will willingly suffer for thee, whatsoever thy pleasure is shall befall me. I will receive indifferently from thy Hand, good and evil, sweet and sower, delightful and sorrowful; and give thee thanks for all that happeneth unto me. Keep me from all sin, and I will neither fear Death, nor Hell; So as thou dost not for ever cast me from thee, and blot me out of the Book of Life, what tribulations soever befall me, shall not hurt me.

C H A P. XVIII.

That temporal miseries, by the example of Christ, must be born patiently.

SOn, I descended from Heaven for thy health: I took upon me thy miseries, my Charity and not any necessity drawing me thereunto, that thou mightest learn patience, and not refuse to bear temporal miseries. For from the hour of my Birth, until my Death on the Cross, I was not without suffering of grief. I suffered great want of temporal things: I often heard many complaints against me: I bare patiently shame and reproaches; for Benefits I received Ingratitude; for Miracles, Blasphemies; for Heavenly Doctrine, Reprehensions.

2. Lord, for that thou wert
pati-

patient in thy life time, chiefly in fulfilling the Commandment of thy Father, it is reason that I miserable sinner should have patience in all things according to thy will, and for my own health bear the burden of this corruptible Life, as long as thou wilt. For although this present Life be burdensome, yet notwithstanding it is now by thy Grace made very Meritorious: And by thy example and the foot-steps of thy Saints, more plain, and tollerable to the weak. Yea, much more comfortable also, than it was in times past in the old Law, when the gate of Heaven remained shut: And the way also to Heaven seemed darker, when so few took care to seek after thy Kingdom. Neither they also that then were just, and were ordained to be saved, could enter into the Heavenly glory before thy Passion, and the debt of thy sacred Death was discharged.

208 *The following*

3. O how great thanks am I bound to give thee, that thou hast vouchsafed to shew unto me, and to all faithful Souls a direct, and sure way to thy everlasting Kingdom! For thy life is our way, and by Holy patience we go unto thee, that art our Crown. If thou hadst not gone before us and taught us, who would have taken care to follow thee? Alas how many would stay behind, and remain far off, if they beheld not thy excellent examples! Behold we are yet cold, although we have heard of so many of thy wonders, and thy Heavenly documents! What would become of us if we had not so great light to follow thee?

CHAP.

C H A P. XIX.

*Of suffering of injuries: And who
is proved to be truly Patient.*

WHat is it thou sayst, Son?
Cease to complain, considering my passion, and that of my other Saints, Thou hast not yet made resistance to the shedding of Bloud. It is but little thou sufferest, in comparison of them that have suffered so much, so strongly tempted, so grievously afflicted, so many ways tried and exercised. Thou oughtest therefore to call to mind the heavy sufferings of others, that thou maist the easier bear the little adversities which thou sufferest. And if they seem not little, beware least thy impatience be cause thereof. Yet whether they be little or great, endeavour to bear all patiently. L 5 2. How

210 *The following*

2. How much the better thou disposest thy self to suffering, so much the more wisely thou doest, and so much the more doest thou merit: Thou shalt more easily also endure it, if thy mind be prepared, and thy self accustomed thereunto. Do not say, I cannot suffer these things of such an one, at the Hands of such a person, nor, such things are not to be suffered by me, for he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with those things which I never thought of: But of another I will willingly suffer, and as I shall see cause. Such a thought is foolish; it considereth not the vertue of patience, nor by whom it shall be crowned, but rather weigheth the persons, and the injuries offered.

3. He is not truly patient, that will not suffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he listeth. But he that is indeed patient,

tient, mindeth not by whom he is exercised ; whether by his Superiours, or some of his equals, or by his inferiours : Whether by a good and holy Man, or by a perverse or and unworthy person. But indifferently from all Creatures, how much soever, or how often soever any Adversity happeneth unto him, he taketh all thankfully as from the hands of God, and esteemeth it a great gain : Because nothing before God, how little soever, so it be suffered for God, can be without merit.

4. Be thou therefore always prepared for the Fight, if thou wilt have the Victory. Without combat thou canst not attain unto the Crown of Patience. If thou wilt not suffer, thou refusest to be Crowned. But if thou desirest to be Crowned, fight Manfully, and endure Patiently : without labour there is no coming

to rest: Nor without fight can the victory be obtained. Lord, let that be made possible to me by thy grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature. Thou knowest that I can suffer little, and that I am quickly dismayed, when a small aduersity ariseth. Let all exercise of tribulation be made pleasing unto me, and be welcome for thy name: For to suffer and to be troubled for thee, is very profitable for my soul.

CHAP. XX.

Of the acknowledging of our own infirmities: And of the miseries of this life.

I Will confesse against me my injustice: I will confesse unto thee, O Lord, my infirmities. Oftentimes it is a small matter that discomforteth, and grieveth me.

me. I purpose to resist with courage, but when a small temptation cometh, it bringeth me into very narrow straits. It is sometimes a very trifle, from whence great temptations do proceed. And whilst I think my self somewhat safe, when I least expect it, I find my self sometimes overcome with a small blast

2. Behold therefore, Lord, my imbecillity, and frailty every way known unto thee; Have mercy on me and deliver me out of the mire of my infirmities, that I stick not fast therein: Let me not for ever remain dejected. This is that which oftentimes beareth me back, and confoundeth me in thy sight, for that I am so subject to fall, and weak in resisting of my passions. And though I do not altogether consent, yet their continual assaults are troublesome and grievous unto me: And it is tedious, and a very irksome

214 *The following*

irksome thing to live thus daily in strife. Hereby my infirmity is made known unto me: For that wicked fancies do always much more easily enter in upon me, than they can be cast out again.

3. O mighty God of Israel; the zealous lover of faithful souls, let it please thee to consider the labour and sorrow of thy servant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh. Strengthen me with Heavenly force, lest my old man, my miserable flesh, not fully as yet subject to the spirit, prevail and get the upper hand: Against which I ought to fight, as long as I breath in this miserable life. Alas, what a kind of life is this, where tribulations and miseries are never wanting! Where all is set with snares, and compassed with Enemies! For when one tribulation or temptation goeth away, another cometh, yea and during the first conflict also,
many

many others come unlooked for, one after another.

4. And how can a life be loved that hath so many afflictions, and is subject to so many calamities and miseries? How is it called a life that begetteth so many deaths, and plagues? And yet it is loved, and many seek to delight themselves therein. The world is oftentimes blamed, that it is deceitful and vain, and yet it is not easily forsaken, because the inclinations of our flesh do too much overrule us. Some things draw us to love it, others to contemn it. To the love of the world do draw us the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life: But the pains and miseries that do justly follow them, causeth a hatred and loathsomnes thereof.

5. But alas wicked pleasure overcometh the mind, which is given over to the world; and she esteemeth

216 *The Following.*

esteemeth it a delight to be under thorns, because she hath neither seen nor tasted the sweetness of God, and the inward delight of vertue. But they that perfectly contemn the world, and endeavour to live to God under holy discipline, these are not ignorant of the divine sweetness, promised to the true forsakers of the world, and do more clearly see how grievously, the world erreth, how it is many ways deceived.

CHAP. XXI.

*That we are to rest in God above
all his gifts.*

Above all things, and in all things, my soul, thou shalt ever rest in God, For he is the everlasting rest of the Saints. Grant me, most sweet and loving Jesu, to rest in thee above all Creatures, above all health and beauty,

beauty, above all glory and Honour, above all power and dignity, above all knowledge and Learning, above all riches and arts, above all joy and gladness, above all fame and praise, above all sweetness and comfort, above all hope and promise, above all merit and desire, above all gifts and presents that thou canst give and impart unto us, above all joy and jubily that the mind of man can receive and feel : Lastly above Angels and Archangels, and above all the Heavenly Host, above all visible and invisible things, and above all that, that thou art not, my God.

2. For that thou, my Lord God, surpassest all ; thou alone most high, thou alone most powerful, thou alone most full and sufficient, thou alone most sweet and comfortable, thou alone most beautiful, and loving, thou alone most noble and glorious above all things :

218 *The following*

things: In whom all good things together, both are perfectly, and ever have been, and shall be. And therefore it is too little, and not sufficient, whatsoever thou bestowest on me besides thy self, or revealest unto me of thy self, or promigest, whilst thou art not seen, and not fully obtained. For surely my heart cannot rest, nor be fully contented unless it rest in thee, and surmount all gifts and creatures whatsoever.

3. O my most beloved spouse Christ Jesus, the most Chast lover, the governour of all creatures. Who will give me wings of true liberty to fly, and rest in thee! O when shall it be fully granted me to consider in quietness of mind, and see how sweet thou art, my Lord God! When shall I fully recollect my self in thee, that for thy love I may not feel my self, but thee alone, above all sense, and feeling, in a manner not known

known unto all. But now I oftentimes lament, and bear my infelicity with grief. For that many evils occur in this vale of miseries, which do often, trouble, grieve, and darken me; often hinder and distract me, allure and intangle me, to the end I should not have free access unto thee, and that I should not enjoy thy sweet and Heavenly embracings, which thou always givest to the Blessed and celestial spirits. Let my sighs and manifold desolations on Earth move thee.

4. O Jesus, splendor of Eternal glory, and comfort of the Pilgrime-soul, with thee is my tongue without voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee. How long doth my Lord delay to come? Let him come unto me his poor servant, and make me glad. Let him put out his hand, to deliver me miserable wretch, from all anguish. Come, come, Blessed Lord:

220 *The following*

Lord : For without thee I shall have no joyful day , nor hour. Thou art my joy , and without thee there is nothing but want. A wretched creature I am, and in a manner imprisoned, and loaden with irons : Until thou comfortest me with the light of thy presence, and givest me liberty, and shewest a favourable countenance unto me.

5. Let others seek what they please instead of thee : But for me, nothing else doth, nor shall delight me, but thou only my God, my hope, my everlasting health. I will not hold my peace, nor cease to pray, until thy grace return again, and thou speak inwardly unto me. Behold I am here : Behold I come unto thee , because thou hast called upon me. Thy tears, and the desire of thy soul, thy humility, and the contrition of thy heart, have inclined, and brought me unto thee.
And

And I said: Lord I have called thee, and have desired to enjoy thee, being ready to forsake all things for thee. For, thou first hast stirred me up that I might seek thee. Blessed be thou therefore, O Lord, that hast shewed this goodness to thy servant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

6. What hath thy servant more to say before thee, but that he doth greatly humble himself in thy sight, always mindful of his own iniquity, and baseness? For there is none like unto thee in all whatsoever is wonderful, in heaven and Earth. Thy words are good, thy judgments true; and by thy providence all things are governed. Praise therefore and glory be unto thee, O wisdom of the eternal Father: Let my tongue, my soul, and all creatures together praise and bless thee.

CHAP.

222 *The Following*

CH A P. XXII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

OPen, O Lord, my heart in thy Law, and teach me to walk in thy Commandments. Grant me to understand thy will, and to remember thy benefits, as well in general, as in particular, with great reverence and diligent consideration: That hence forward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks. But I know, and confess, that I am not able to give thee due thanks, for the favours which thou bestowest upon me, even in the least moment. I am less than the least of thy benefits: And when I consider the excellency of thy Majesty, the greatness thereof maketh my spirit to faint.

2. All that we have in our soul and body, and whatsoever we possess outwardly or inwardly, naturally or spiritually, are thy benefits, and do praise thee, as bountiful, pious, and good, from whom we have received all that is good. Although one have received more, another less, all notwithstanding are thine, and without thee even the least cannot be had. He that hath received greater, cannot glory of his own desert, nor extol himself, above others, nor insult over the lesser: For he is greater and better that ascribeth least unto himself, and is more humble and devout in rendering thanks. And he that esteemeth himself basest of all men, and judgeth himself most unworthy, is fittest to receive greater blessings.

3. And he that hath received fewer, ought not to be sorry nor bear it impatiently, nor envy
them

224 *The Following*

them that are enriched with greater store, but attend rather unto thee, and chiefly praise thy goodness, for that thou bestowest thy gifts so bountifully, so freely, and so willingly without respect of persons. All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given to every one; and why this man hath less, and he more, it is not ours, but thine to determine: Who dost weigh in just measure the deserts of every one.

4. Wherefore, my Lord God, I esteem it as a great benefit, not to have much, whereby outwardly and before men I might seem worthy of praise and glory: So that he, who considereth his own poverty, and baseness ought not therefore to conceive grief, or sorrow, or to be therefore troubled, but rather to take great comfort, and to be glad: For
that

that thou, O God, hast chosen the poor and humble, and the despised of this world for thy self, and for thy familiar and domestical friends. Witnesses are thy Apostles themselves, whom thou hast appointed Princes over all the Earth. And yet they lived without complaint in the world, so humble and simple, mean to the eyes of men, without all malice and deceit, that they rejoiced to receive contumelies for thy name, and what the world abhorreth, they embraced with great affection.

5. Nothing therefore ought so to rejoyce him that loveth thee, and acknowledgeth thy benefits, as the accomplishment of thy will in himself, and the pleasure of thy eternal appointment; wherewith he ought to be so contented and comforted, that he would as willingly be the least, as any would wish to be the greatest: And as

M

peace-

226 *The following*

peaceable and content in the last
as is the first place, And as willingly
to be despised and contemned,
and to be of no esteem on
account, as to be preferred in
honour before all others, and to be
greater in the World. For thy
will and the love of thy glory,
ought to be preferred before all
things : And to comfort him
more, and please him better, than
all the benefits which he hath received,
or can desire.

CHAP. XXIII.

*Of four things that bring much
peace.*

SOn, now I will teach thee
the way of peace, and true
liberty. Do, Lord, I beseech
thee, as thou saist, for I shall
be very glad to hear it. Endeavour
my Son to do rather the
will

will of another, then thy own.
Ever choose rather to have less
then more. Always seek the
lowest place, and to be inferiour
to every one. Wish always, and
pray, that the will of God may
be wholly fulfilled in thee. Behold
such a man entreth into the li-
mits of peace, and most quiet
rest.

2. Lord, this thy short speech
containeth much perfection. It
is little in words but full in sence,
and abundant in fruit. For if it
could exactly be kept by me, than
should I not so easily be trou-
bled. For as often as I feel my
self unquiet and afflicted, I find
that I have strayed from this doct-
rine. But thou that canst all
things, and ever lovest the good
and profit of my soul, increase in
me thy grace, that I may fulfil
thy words, and perfect my own
health.

228 *The following*

A prayer against evil thoughts.

3. My Lord God, be not far from me; my God have regard to help me: For sundry thoughts have risen up against me. And great fears, afflicting my soul. How shall I pass through them without hurt? How shall I break them? I, saith he, will go before thee, and will humble the glorious of the Earth. I will open the doors of the prison, and reveal unto thee hidden secrets. Do Lord as thou saist, and let all evil thoughts fly from before thy face. This is my hope, and my only comfort, to fly unto thee in all tribulation, to trust in thee, to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

*A prayer for enlightning of the
mind.*

4. Enlighten me O good Jesu,
with the clearness of inward light,
and expel all darkness of my heart.
Repress the many wavering
thoughts, and bear down the fu-
ry of the temptations which
violently assault me. Fight
strongly for me, and vanquish
the evil beast, that is, the allur-
ing concupiscences, that peace
may be made in thy vertue, and
abundance of thy praise sound
in thy holy Court, which is a pure
conscience. Command the winds
and tempests: Say unto the Sea;
Be still: And to the northwind,
Blow not; and a great calm
shall ensue.

5 Send forth thy light and
thy truth, that they may shine
upon the Earth: For I am empty
and unprofitable Earth, until

230 *The following*

thou impartest thy light unto me. Pour out thy grace from above, wash my heart, with heavenly dew, give waters of devotion, to wash the face of the Earth, to bring forth good and perfect fruit. Lift up my mind, overcharged with the weight of Sin: Draw up my whole desire to heavenly treasures, that having tasted the sweetness of celestial happiness, it may loath to think of Earthly vanities.

6. Take me violentiy to thee, deliver me from all unstable comfort of creatures: For no created thing can fully quiet and satisfy my desire. Joyn me unto thee with an unspeakable bond of love: For thou only filest the mind of him that loves thee, and without thee all things are distastful.

C H A P. XXIV.

*Of flying curious inquiry of the
life of others.*

SOn, be not curious: Trouble not thy self with idle cares. What is this or that to thee? do thou follow me. For what is it to thee, whether that man be such or no, or whether this man do, or speak this or that? Thou shalt not need to answer for others, but shalt give account of thy self. Why therefore dost thou trouble thy self? Behold I know every one what he is, and do see all things that are under the sun: And do understand how it is with every one; what he thinketh, what he would, and at what his intention aimeth. All things therefore are to be committed unto me: But do

M 4

thou

232 *The Following*

thou keep thy self in good peace, and suffer the unquiet to do as they will. Whatsoever they shall have done, or said, shall fall upon themselves, for they cannot deceive me.

2. Desire not too great fame in this world, nor to be known to many, nor to have the private love of men: For these things breed distractions, and cause great darkness of heart. I would willingly utter my words, and reveal my secrets unto thee, if thou didst diligently observe my coming, and didst open the door of thy heart unto me. Be careful and watch in prayer, and humble thy self in all things.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

*Wherein doth the firm peace of
the heart, and true profit consist.*

SOn, I have said : Peace I leave
to you, my peace I give to
you: Not as the world giv-
eth, do I give to you. All do de-
sire peace, but all care not for
those things that appertain unto
true peace. My peace is with the
humble, and meek of heart. Thy
peace shall be in much patience.
If thou wilt hear me and follow
my voice, thou shalt enjoy much
peace. What then shall I do
Lord? In every thing to attend
unto thy self what thou doest,
and what thou sayest: And direct
thy whole intention unto this, that
thou mayest please me alone, and
desire or seek nothing out of me.
Of the sayings and doings of o-
thers,

M 5

234 *The following*

thers, judge nothing rashly : Neither do thou intangle thy self with things not committed unto thee: And doing thus, it may be thou shalt be little or seldom troubled.

2. But never to feel any trouble at all, nor to suffer any grief of heart or body, is not the estate of this life, but of everlasting rest. Think not therefore that thou hast found true peace, if thou feelest no sorrow, nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary : Nor that it is perfect, if all things be done according to thy desire. Neither do thou then esteem highly of thy self, or imagine thy self to be specially beloved, if thou be in great devotion, and sweetness : For in these things a true lover of vertue is not tried : Neither doth the profit and perfection of man consist in having them.

3. Wherein then Lord ? In offering thy self from the very bot-

tom

tom of thy heart, unto the divine service, not seeking thy own interest, or commodity, neither in great nor little, neither in time nor eternity : So that with equal countenance, thou maist persist in thanksgiving, both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all things with an equal ballance. If thou be of such courage and so patient in hope, that when inward comfort is withdrawn from thee, thou prepare thy heart to suffer greater matters and not justify thy self, as though thou oughtest not to suffer these, and so great afflictions, but justify me in whatsoever I appoint, and praise my holy name; then thou walkest in the true and right way of peace; and thou shalt have undoubted hope to see my face again with great joy. And if thou attain to the full contempt of thy self; then shalt thou enjoy as great abondance of peace as
M 6 thy

thy banishment may permit.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Of the excellency of a free mind,
which humble prayer better de-
serveth, then reading.*

Lord, it is the work of a perfect man, never to slack his mind from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and as it were to pass without care through many cares: Not faintly, but with a certain privilege of a free mind, adhering by inordinate affection to no creature.

2. I beseech thee most merciful God, preserve me from the cares of this life; lest I should be too much intangled thereby: And from the many necessities of the body, lest I should be enthralled by pleasure: From all hindrances of the soul, lest broken

ken with troubles I should be dejected and dismayed. I mean not from those things that Worldly vanity so greatly desireth: But from those miseries, which as punishments do weigh down and hinder the Soul of thy Servant, with the general curse of Mortality, that it cannot enter into liberty of Spirit, as often as it would.

3. O my God, the unspeakable sweatness, make bitter unto me all carnal comfort, which may draw me away from the love of everlasting happiness, and wickedly allure me to it self with the force of certain present delight, Let not Flesh and Bloud overcome me, O Lord. Let not the World and the short Glory thereof deceive me. Let not the Devil and his subtil fraud supplant me. Give me force to resist, patience to suffer, and constancy to persevere. Give me instead of all comforts of
the

238 *The following.*

the World the most sweet unction of thy Spirit, and in lieu of carnal love, power into my Soul the love of thy Name.

4. Behold, Meat, Drink, Cloaths, and other necessities for the maintenance of the Body, are burdensome unto a fervent Spirit. Grant me to affect such nourishments in due measure, and not to be intangled with an over great desire of them. It is not lawful to renounce them wholly, because Nature is to be maintained: But to desire superfluities, and those things that do rather delight then sustain, the law of God forbiddeth: For otherwise the Flesh would rebel against the Spirit; Herein I beseech thee, let thy Hand Govern me, and Teach me, that I may not exceed.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVII.

*That private love most hindreth
from the chiefest Good.*

SOn, thou oughtest to give all
for all, and to retain nothing
of thy self. Know that the
love of thy self, doth hurt thee
more, then any thing in the
World. According to the love,
and affection thou bearest them,
so doth every thing cleave unto
thee more or less. If thy love
be pure, simple, and well ordered,
thou shalt be free from bondage.
Covet not that which thou
maiest not have. Be not willing
to have that, which may hinder
thee and deprive thee of inward
Liberty. It is a wonderful thing
that thou committest not thy
self wholly unto me, from the
bottom of thy Heart, with all
things,

240 *The following*

things, that thou canst desire, or have.

2. Why dost thou consume thy self with vain greif? Why tirest thou thy mind with needless cares? Resign thy self to me, and thou shalt feel no loss at all. If thou seekest this or that, and wouldest be here or there, to enjoy thy own commodity and pleasure; thou shalt never be in quiet, nor free from trouble of mind: For in every thing, somewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be some that will cross thee.

3. Not every external thing therefore attained, and heaped together helpeth thee: But it rather availeth if thou dispise it, and dost root it out from thy Heart; which thou must not understand only of thy Revenews and Wealth, but of the desire of Honour also, and vain Praise; all which do pass away with this
fading

Or fading World. The place avail-
eth little, if the Spirit of fer-
me your be wanting: Neither shall
thy that peace which is sought a-
d-broad long continue, if the
to state of thy Heart be destitue of
s a true Foundation: that is, un-
less thou persist in me, thou
maist change, but not better thy
self. For when occasion doth
happen, thou shall find that which
thou soughtest to fly and perhaps
more.

*A Prayer for cleansing the Heart,
& obtaining of Heavenly wisdom.*

4. Confirm me O Lord with
the grace of thy holy Spirit,
Give me force to strengthen my
inward Man, and to purge my
Heart from all unprofitable care,
and grief; Nor to be drawn away
with sundry desires of any thing
either little or great: But to con-
sider all things, how they are
tran-

242 *The Following*

transitory, and do quickly fade, and how that I my self do also pass away together with them; for nothing is permanent under the Sun, where all things are vanity and affliction of mind. O how wise is he that so considereth them.

5. Grant me, O Lord, Heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things to seek and find thee, above all things to delight in thee, and to love thee, and to think of all Created things as they are, according to the disposition of thy wisdom. Grant me prudently to avoid him that flatters me, and to suffer patiently him that contradicts me. It is great wisdom not to be moved with every blast of words, Not to give ear to dangerous flattery: For so we shall go on securely in the way which we have begun.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Against the Tongue of Slanderers.

SOn, be not grieved if some think evil of thee, and speak that which thou dost not willingly hear. Thou oughtest to judge the worst of thy self, and to think no Man weaker then thy self. If thou walk according to Spirit, thou wilt not much esteem of flying words. It is not small wisdom to be silent in times of Evil, and inwardly to turn to me, and not to be troubled with the Judgement of Men.

2. Let not thy peace be in the Tongues of Men. For whether they judge well or evil, thou art nevertheless always the same. Where is true Peace, and true Glory? Is it not in me? And he that coveteth not to please Men,
nor

244 *The following*

nor feareth to displease them shall enjoy much peace. From inordinate love and vain fear riseth all disquiet of Heart and distraction of the senses.

C H A P. XXIX.

*How we ought to call upon God
and bless him when tribu-
lation draweth near.*

BLessed (O Lord) be thy Name for ever ; since it pleaseth thee that this temptation and tribulation should fall upon me. I cannot flie it, but have need to flie to thee , that thou maist help me, and turn it to my good. Lord I am now afflicted, and it is not well with me, I am much troubled with this present grief. And now, beloved Father, what shall I say ? I am taken in narrow straits , save me in
this

em
ro
r
an
this hour. Yea, therefore I am fallen in this hour, that thou maist be glorified when I shall be greatly humbled, and by thee delivered. Let it please thee Lord, to deliver me: For poor wretch that I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go without thee? Grant patience Lord, even this time also. Help me my God, and then I will not fear how much soever I be oppressed.

2. And now in this, what shall I say? Lord thy will be done, I have well deserved to be afflicted and grieved. Surely I ought to bear it: and I would to God I might bear it with patience, until the tempest be passed over, and it become calm. But thy omnipotent hand is able to take this temptation from me, and to assuage the violence thereof, that I utterly sink not under it, as oftentimes heretofore thou hast done unto me, my Mercy. And
how

246 *The Following*

how much the more hard it is to me, so much the more easie is this change of thy mighty Hand to thee.

C H A P. XXX.

*Of craving the aid, and confidence
of recovering Grace.*

SOn, I am thy Lord, who do use to give comfort in the day of tribulation. Come unto me when it is not well with thee. This is that which most of all hindreth Heavenly consolation, that thou art slow in turning thy self unto Prayer. For before thou dost earnestly commend thy self to me, thou seekest many comforts, and delightest thy self in outward things. And hence it proceedeth that all doth little profit thee, until thou consider that I am he, that delivereth those that trust in me : And that out of
me

is
e
land
me, there is neither powerful help,
nor profitable counsel, nor reme-
dy that can continue. But now
thou having recovered breath af-
ter the tempest, gather strength
again in the light of thy Mercies:
For I am at hand saith our Lord,
to repair all, not only entirely,
but also abundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to
me? Or am I like unto him that
promiseth and performeth not?
Where is thy Faith? Be firm and
constant. Take courage and be
patient; comfort will be given
thee in due time. Attend me, ex-
pect I will come and cure thee.
It is a temptation that vexeth
thee: And a vain fear that af-
frighteth thee. What else doth
the care for future certainties
bring thee, but sorrow upon sor-
row? Sufficient for the day is
the evil thereof. It is a vain and
unprofitable thing to be grieved,
or to rejoyce for future things,
that

248 *The following*

that perhaps will never happen.

3. But it is incident to man to be deluded with such imaginations: And a sign of little courage to be so easily drawn away by the suggestion of our Enemy. For he careth not so he delude and deceive thee, whether it be true or false which he propoſeth. Whether he overthrow thee with the love of present, or the fear of future things. Let not therefore thy Heart be troubled, neither do thou fear. Believe in me, and put thy trust in my Mercy. When thou thinkest thy self furthest off from me, oftentimes I am nearest unto thee. When thou judgeſt that almost all is lost, then oftentimes greatest gain of Merit is at hand. All is not lost when any thing falleth out contrary unto thee. Thou must not judge according to that which thou feeſt for the present: Nor give thy self over to any
grief

grief from whence soever it cometh, as though all hope of delivery were quite gone.

4. Think not thy self wholly left, although for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn thy desired comfort: for this is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven. And without doubt it is more expedient for thee, and the rest of my Servants, that ye be exercised with many adversities, then that ye should have all things according to your desires. I know the secret thoughts of thy Heart, and that it is very expedient for thy Soules health, that thou be left sometimes without tast and feeling of Spiritual sweetness, lest perhaps thou shouldest be puffed up with good success, and shouldest please thy self in that which thou art not. That, which I have given, I can take away, and restore it again when I please.

N

5. When

250 *The Following*

5. When I give it, it is mine: When I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine: For mine is every good and every perfect gift. If I send thee affliction, or any Cross whatsoever, repine not, nor be not dismayed: I can quickly lift thee up again, and turn all thy sorrow into joy. Nevertheless I am just, and greatly to be praised, when I do all this unto thee.

6. If thou be wise and consider well thy case, thou wilt never yield so cowardly to grief, for any adversity that befalls thee, but rather rejoyce and give thanks: Yea to account this thy only joy, that afflicting thee with sorrows, I do not spare thee. As my Father hath loved me, I also love you, said I unto my beloved Disciples; whom certainly I sent not to temporal joys, but to great conflicts: Not to honours, but to contempts: Not to idleness, but

but to labours: Not to rest, but to bring much Fruit in patience. My Son remember these words.

C H A P. XXXI.

*Of the contempt of all Creatures;
to find our Creator.*

Lord, I stand yet in need of great Grace, if I must go so far as that no Man or Creature can hinder me. For as long as any thing holdeth me, I cannot flie freely unto thee. He desired to flie with great liberty that said: Who will give me wings like a Dove, and I will flie and rest? What thing more quiet then a simple eye: And what more free, then he that desireth nothing upon Earth? Man ought therefore to ascend above all creatures, and perfectly to forsake himself, and to remain in excels

252 *The Following*

of mind : And consider that thou, who art the Maker of all things, hast nothing amongst creatures like unto thee. And unless a man be free from the affection of all creatures, he cannot with freedom of mind attend unto divine things. And for this cause there are so few contemplative men to be found, for that few can wholly sequester themselves from fading creatures.

2. Much grace is necessary to lift up a soul, and to carry it above it self. And unless a man be lifted up in spirit, and delivered from all creatures, and wholly united unto God, whatsoever he knoweth, and whatsoever he hath, is of little account. Long shall he be little, and lye in earthly baseness, that esteemeth any thing great, but the one only unmeasurable and eternal Good. For whatsoever is not God is nothing. There is great difference between the wisdom of a spiritual and devout person,

person, and the knowledge of a learned and studious Clerk. Far more noble is that learning which floweth from above from the divine influence, then that which is painfully gotten by the wit of man.

3. There are many that desire contemplation, but they endeavour not to exercise those things that are required thereunto. It is a great hindrance that we rest in signs and sensible things. And have little true mortification. I know not what it is, nor by what Spirit we are led, nor what we pretend, we that seem to be called spiritual, that we take so much pains, and so great care for transitory and base things, and scarce or seldom think of our own inward profit, with full recollection of our senses.

4. Alas, presently after a sleight recollection, we break forth, and weigh not our words with diligent examination. We

254 *The following*

mind not where our affections lye? Nor bewail the impurity and many faults that are in all our actions. For all flesh had corrupted her way, and therefore did that general flood ensue. Since our inward affection then is much corrupted, it must needs be that our actions proceeding thereof, be corrupted, as a sign of the want of inward vigour. From a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

5. We ask how much one hath done: But how vertuous his actions are, is not so diligently considered. We inquire whether he be strong, rich, beautiful, handsome, a good writer, a good singer, or a good labourer: But how poor he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and spiritual, is seldome spoken of. Nature respecteth outward things, grace turneth her self to the inward vertues. That is often deceived:

ceived: This hath her trust in God, to the end she be not deceived.

C H A P. XXXII.

Of Denial of our selves, and forsaking all our affections.

SOn, thou canst not possess perfect liberty, unless thou wholly deny thy self. All such as be lovers of themselves are bound in fetters, they are covetous, curious, wanderers, seekers of ease, and not of those things that appertain to Jesus Christ; but oftentimes devising, and framing that which will not continue. For all shall perish that proceedeth not from God. Keep this short and compleat word: Forsake all, and thou shalt find all. Leave thy inordinate desires,

256 *The following*

and thou shalt find rest. Consider this well : And when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all.

2. Lord, this is not one days work, nor childrens sport : Yea, in this short sentence all the perfection of Religious persons is included. Son, thou must not go back, nor presently be dejected, when thou hearest the way of the perfect ; but rather be stirred up to more worthy and noble attempts, or at least to conceive an earnest desire thereof. I would it were so well with thee, and thou wert come so far, that thou wert no longer a lover of thy self, but didst stand meerly at my beck, and at his, whom I have appointed a Father over thee : Then thou shouldest exceedingly praise me, all thy life would pass away in joy and peace. Thou hast yet many things to forsake, which unless thou wholly resign over unto me,
thou

thou shalt not attain to that which thou desirest. I counsel thee to buy of me purified gold, that thou mayest become rich, that is, heavenly wisdom, which treadeth under foot all base and Earthly things. Set little by the wisdom of this world, esteem not of the contentment of men, nor thy own fancies.

3. I said, that thou shouldest buy the mean and base things, with the precious, and those that were with men of great esteem. For true Heavenly wisdom seemeth very base, of small account, and is scarce thought of by men: For that esteemeth not highly of it self, nor seeketh to be magnified upon Earth: Which many praise from the teeth outward, but in their life they are far from it: yet is it the precious pearl which is hidden from many.

C H A P. XXXIII.

*Of inconstancy of the heart, and
of directing our final intentions
unto God.*

SOn, trust not to thy affecti-
on. That, which now is, will
quickly change into ano-
ther. As long as thou livest, thou
art subject to mutability, even
against thy will: So that now
thou art merry, now sad, now
quiet, now troubled, now devout,
now distracted, now diligent,
now idle, now heavy, now light.
But he that is wise, and well in-
structed in spirit, remaineth al-
ways one in the midst of the
changes, not heeding what he
seeketh in himself, or which way
the wind of mutability bloweth;
but that the whole intention of
his mind may tend, as it ought, to

the

the most perfect and best end. For so he may continue one, and the self same, without any change in the midst of so many sundry chances, directing always the sincere eye of his intention unto me.

2. And how much purer the eye of the intention is, so much the more constantly doth he pass through the variety of many contrary waves. But in many things the eye of a sincere intention waxeth blind, for it quickly looketh upon some delightful object that occurreth. And it is rare to find one that is wholly free from all blemish of seeking himself. So the Jews in times past came into *Bethania* to *Martha* and *Mary*, not for Jesus alone, but to see *Lazarus* also. The eye of our intention therefore, is to be purged, that it may be sincere and pure, and to be directed unto me, neglecting the multitude

260 *The following*
and variety of Earthly objects.

C H A P. XXXIV.

*That God is sweet above all things,
and in all things, to him that
loveth.*

BEhold, my God, and all things ! What would I have more, and what can I desire more happy ? O sweet and comfortable word ! But to him that loveth the word, not the world, nor those things that are in the world. My God, and all things : Enough is said to him that loveth to repeat it often. For when thou art present, all things do yeild delight, but when thou art absent, all becomes irksome. Thou givest quiet of heart and much peace, and pleasant joy. Thou makest men think well of all, and praise thee in all things : Neither can a-
ny

ny thing please us long without thee: But if it be pleasant and delightfome, thy grace must be present, and it must be seasoned with the sweetness of thy wisdom.

2. What can be distastful unto him, to whom thou art pleasing: And whom thou delightest not, what can be to him pleasant! But the wise in this world, and who have their contentment in sensual things, cannot attain to thy wisdom: For in the world is much vanity, and in the flesh is death. But they, that follow thee by the contempt of worldly things, and mortification of the flesh, are proved to be truly wise: For they are changed from vanity to truth, from flesh to spirit. To these God is sweet, and what good soever is found in creatures, they wholly refer unto the praise of their Maker. Notwithstanding great, yea very great, is the difference

262 *The Following*

rence between the sweetness of the Creator, and of the creature, of eternity and of time, of uncreated and created light.

3. O everlasting light, surpassing all created lights, cast forth the beams of thy brightness from above, and pierce the most inward corners of my heart: Purify, rejoyce, clarify, and quicken my spirit with all the powers thereof, that I may cleave unto thee with excess of unspeakable joy. O when will that blessed and desired hour come, that I may be filled with thy presence, and thou maist be unto me all in all things! As long as this is not granted me, I shall not have full nor perfect joy. Alas! My old man yet liveth in me, he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead. He doth yet cover strongly against the spirit, and moveth evil wars, and suffereth not the Kingdom of my soul to be in peace.

4. But

4. But thou, that rulest the Powers of the sea, and assuagest the motion of the waves, rise and help me: Dissipate the people that desire war, and destroy them in thy might, and let thy hand be glorified: For there is no hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

C H A P. XXXV.

That there is no security from temptation in this life.

SOn, there is no security in this life; as long as thou livest thou shalt always have need of spiritual armour. Thou livest among enemies, and art assaulted on all sides. If therefore thou defendest not thy self on every side with the shield of patience, thou canst not be long unwounded. Moreover if thou fix
not

264 *The following*

not thy heart on me with a sincere will to suffer all things for me, thou canst not sustain the heat of this battel, nor get the victorious crown which they have, that are in glory. Thou oughtest therefore manfully to go through all, and to use a strong hand against whatsoever withstandeth thee: For to him that overcometh is given Manna; and to the negligent is left much wo.

2. If thou seekest rest in this World, how wilt thou then attain to everlasting rest? Give not thy self to much ease, but to much patience. Seek true peace, not in Earth, but in Heaven; not in men, nor in any creature, but in God alone. Thou oughtest for the love of God willingly to endure whatsoever griefs, temptations, anxieties, necessities, infirmities, injuries, detractions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts,

tempts : These help to the attaining of vertue : These try a Novice of Christ : These make a Heavenly crown. I will give an everlasting reward for a short labour, and infinite glory for transitory confusion.

3. Thinkest thou, that thou shalt always have spiritual consolations at will ? My Saints had not so ; but many afflictions, sundry temptations, and many discomforts : All which they endured patiently, and trusted rather in God, then in themselves : knowing that the sufferings of this time are not condign to the deserving of future glory. Wilt thou have that in an instant, which many after tears, and great labours have hardly obtained ? Expect the coming of thy Lord, do manfully, be of good courage : Fear not, do not fly, but offer both body and soul for the glory of God. I will reward thee in most plentiful manner

266 *The Following*

manner and I will be with thee in
all thy tribulations.

C H A P. XXXVI.

*Against the vain judgments
of men.*

SOn, fix thy heart stedfastly
on God, and fear not the
judgments of men, when thy
conscience giveth testimony of
justice and innocency. It is a good
and a happy thing to suffer in that
sort: Neither will it be burden-
some to an humble mind, nor to
him that trusteth rather in God,
then in himself. The most part of
men are given to talk much, and
therefore little care is to be had
of their words: Neither is it possi-
ble to satisfy all. Though the
Apostle endeavoured to please all
in our Lord, and made himself
all unto all, yet he little regard-

ed

ed that he was judged by humane day.

2. He did for the edification and health of others as much he could, and lay in him: Yet could he not hinder, but that he was sometimes judged, and despised by others. Therefore he committed all to God, who knew all, and defended himself with patience and humility against evil tongues, and such as thought vanities and lyes, and spake what they listed: Yet sometimes notwithstanding he answered, lest the weak might have received scandal by his silence.

3. Who art thou, that fearest a mortal man? To day he is, and to morrow he is not seen. Fear God and the terrour of men shall not trouble thee. What harm can the words or injuries of any do thee? He rather hurteth himself then thee: Neither can he avoid the judgment of God, be
he

268 *The following*

he what he will. Have thou God before thy eyes, and contend not with complaining words. And if for the present thou seemest to be trodden down, and to suffer shame and confusion without desert, do not repine, neither do thou lessen thy crown by thy impatience; but rather lift up thy eyes to me in Heaven. I am able to deliver thee from shame and wrong, and to repay every one according to their works.

C H A P. XXXVII.

*Of a full and pure resignation of
ourselves, for the obtaining
freedom of Heart.*

SOn, leave thy self, and thou shalt find me. Make choice of nothing, appropriate nothing to thy self, and thou shalt ever gain. For greater Grace shall
al-

always be given thee, when thou dost perfectly resign thy self, and not turn back to take thy self, again. Lord, how often shall I resign my self? And wherein shall I forsake my self? Always, and in every thing, as well in little as in great. I do except nothing, but do require that thou be as it were naked and void of all things. Otherwise, how canst thou be perfectly mine, and I thine, unless both within and without thou be free from all self will? And how much the sooner thou dost this, so much the better shalt thou find thy self, and how much the more fully and sincerely thou dost it, so much the more shalt thou please me, and so much the more shalt thou gain.

2. Some there are that resign themselves, but with some exception: For they put not their whole trust in God, and therefore do labour to provide for themselves,

270 *The following*

selves. Some also at the first do
offer all, but afterwards being
assailed with Temptations, do re-
turn again to that which they
had left, and therefore they go
not forwards in the way of ver-
tue. These shall not attain to the
true liberty of a pure Heart, nor
to the grace of my Divine fami-
liarity, unless they first make an
entire resignation, and offer them-
selves a daily Sacrifice unto me.
For without this can never be ob-
tained the union with me, where-
with my Saints enjoy me.

3. I have often said unto thee,
and now again I say the same:
For sake thy self, resign thy self,
and thou shalt enjoy internal
peace. Give all for all; seek
nothing, require nothing, repose
thy self purely, and with a full con-
fidence in me, and I will give
my self unto thee, and darkness
shall not cover thee. Let this be
thy whole Endeavour, let this be
thy

thy Prayer, let this be thy Desire, that casting off all propriety, thou maist all naked follow thy Saviour Jesus; and dying to thy self, maist live Eternally to me. Then shall vain fantasies, evil perturbations, and all superfluous cares flie away: Then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Of good Government in outward things: And of recourse to God in dangers.

SOn, thou oughtest with all diligence to procure, that in every place and action, or external business, thou be inwardly free, and master of thy self, and that all things be under thy disposition, and thou not subject to them; that thou maist be Lord
and

272 *The following*

and Master of thy actions, not a Servant or a Hireling, but rather a Free man, and a true Hebrew belonging to the lot and freedom of the Son of God, who put the things that are present under their Feet, and place their thoughts on that which is Eternal: Who look on transitory things with the left Eye, and with the right do behold the things of Heaven: Who suffer not themselves to be drawn to cleave unto them, but rather dispose and use them, as they are ordained by the Creator of all, who hath left nothing in his Creatures without due order.

2. If thou remain firm and stedfast in all events, and dost not weigh by the outward appearance, nor with a carnal Eye, the things which thou seest and hearest; but presently in every occasion doest enter with *Moses* into the Tabernacle, to ask Counsel of our Lord, thou shalt sometimes

hear

hear the Divine and Celestial Oracle, and shalt return instructed of many things both present and to come. *Moses* had always recourse to the Tabernacle for the deciding of all doubts, and obscure questions, and fled to the help of Prayer, for the remedy of the iniquity, and dangers of Men. So oughtest thou in like manner to flie to the Cloister of thy Heart, earnestly craving the Divine favour. For the Scripture testifieth, that therefore was *Joshua* and the Children of *Israel* deceived by the *Gibeonites*, because they consulted not first with God, but giving too lightly credit to fair words, were deluded with counterfeit piety.

C H A P. XXXIX.

*That a Man must not be over
earnest in his affairs.*

SOn, always commit thy cause to me, I will dispose well of it in due time : Expect my ordination, and thou shalt find it will be for thy good. Lord, I do most willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can profit little. O that I adhered not too much to future events, but offered my self with all readiness of mind to thy divine pleasure.

2. Son, oftentimes a man doth earnestly labour for that which he desireth, and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind, and not to esteem so much of it, as before he did : For mans affections do not long continue fixed on one thing, but do
pass

pass one from another. It is therefore a matter, not of least moment, to forsake our selves even in the least things.

3. The true spiritual profit of man, consisteth in denying and forsaking of himself: And he that is resigned, liveth in great freedom and security. But the ancient enemy, who always laboureth to withstand the servants of God, omitteth at no time his wonted temptations, but day and night lieth still in wait, to cast the unwary, if he can, into the snare of deceit. Watch therefore and pray, saith our Lord, that you enter not into temptation.

CHAP.

276 *The Following*

C H A P. XL.

That man hath no good of himself, nor any thing whereof he can glory.

Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou vouchsafest to visit him? What hath man deserved that thou shouldest give him thy grace? Lord, what cause have I to complain, if thou forsake me? Or if thou dost not that which I desire, what can I justly say against it? Surely, this I may truely think and say: Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have nothing that is good of my self, but in all things I do fail, and am defective, and do ever tend to nothing: And unless thou help me, and dost interiourly instruct me, I become

come cold, and am dissolved.

2. But thou, O Lord, art always the same, and endurest for ever; always good, just, and holily, doing all things well, justly, and holily, and disposing all things with wisdom. But I that am more inclined to fall, then to go forwards, do never continue in one estate: For seven different times are changed over me, yet doth it soon turn to the better, when it so pleaseth thee, and when thou vouchsafest to stretch forth thy helping hand. For thou alone canst help me without the favour of man, and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more changed, but my heart shall be converted, and rest in thee alone.

3. Wherefore if I could once perfectly forsake all humane comfort either for the love of devotion, or for my own necessity, which inforceth me to seek after

278 *The following*

thee (for none else can comfort me) then might I well hope in thy grace, and rejoyce in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks be unto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me: But I am meer vanity, and nothing before thee, an unconstant and weak man. whereof then can I glory: Or why do I desire to be esteemed of? Is it not of nothing? And this is most vain. Truly vain glory is an evil plague and very great vanity, because it draweth from true glory, and robeth the soul of Heavenly grace. For whilst a man pleaseth himself, he displeaseth thee: Whilst he gapeth after the praise of men, he is deprived of true vertue.

5. But true glory, and holy exultation, and joy, is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himself; to rejoyce in thy name, and not in his own vertue, nor to delight

delig
thee.
mine
not
for
par
Th
joy
gl
bu
in

delight in any creature but for thee. Praised be thy name, not mine: Magnified be thy work, not mine. Let thy holy name be for ever blessed, but to me let no part of mens praises be given. Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart. In thee will I glory and rejoyce all the day; but for my self I will not joy, but in my infirmities.

6. Let the Jews seek the glory, which one man giveth to another: I will desire this, which is from God alone. For all humane glory, all temporal honour, all wordly highness, compared to thy eternal glory, is vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God, most Blessed Trinity, to thee alone be all praise, Honour, vertue, and glory for all eternity.

C H A P. XLI.

*Of the contempt of all temporal
honours.*

SOn, trouble not thy self, if thou seest others honoured and advanced, and thy self contemned and debased. Lift up thy heart unto me in heaven, and the contempt of men in Earth will not grieve thee. Lord, we are blind, and quickly seduced with vanity. If I look well into my self, I cannot say, that any creature hath done me wrong; and therefore I cannot justly complain of thee.

2. But because I have often and grievously sinned against thee, all creatures do justly take arms against me. For shame and contempt is due unto me, but unto thee praise, honour, and glory.
And

And unless I do so prepare myself, that I be willing, and do-rejoyce to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to be esteemed nothing at all, I cannot obtain internal strength and peace, nor be spiritually enlightned, nor wholly united unto thee.

C H A P. XLII.

*That our peace is not to be placed
in men.*

SON, if the peace thou hast with any, be grounded on the opinion which thou hast of him, or on the contentment thou receivest in his company, thou shalt ever be unconstant and subject to disquiet: But if thou have recourse unto the ever living and eternal Truth, a friend going from thee or dying shall not grieve thee. The love of thy
O S friend

282 *The following*

friend ought to rest in me; and for me is he to be beloved, who- soever he be, whom thou think- est well of, and is truly dear un- to thee in this life. No friendship can avail, or continue without me; neither is the love true and pure, which they have, whose hearts are not joyned together by me. Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections of beloved friends, that (forasmuch as ap- pertaineth unto thee) thou should- est wish to be without all compa- ny of men. Man approacheth so much the nearer unto God, by how much the further off he de- parteth from all Earthly comfort: So much the higher also he as- cendeth unto God, by how much lower he descendeth into himself, and how much the baser he is in his own conceit.

2. But he that attributeth a- ny good unto himself, hindreth the coming of Gods grace into him,

him. For the grace of the holy Ghost ever seeketh an humble heart. If thou couldst perfectly annihilate thy self, and purge thy self of all created love, then should there flow into thee great abundance of my grace. When thou castest thy eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creator is taken from thee. Learn to overcome thy self in all things, for the love of thy Creator; and then shalt thou be able to attain to Heavenly knowledge. How little soever it be, if it be inordinately loved and regarded, it defileth the soul, and hindreth the enjoying of the chiefest good.

CHAP. XLIII.

*Against vain and secular
knowledge.*

SON, let not the fair speeches,
and subtil sayings of men
move thee. For the King-
dom of God consisteth not in
words, but in vertue. Observe
well the words which I speak:
for they inflame the heart, and
enlighten the mind; induce
compunction, and bring sundry
comforts. Do thou never read to
shew thy self learned or wise:
But labour to mortify thy vices;
for that will profit thee more,
then the knowledge of many
hard and difficult questions.

2. When thou shalt have read
and known many things, thou
oughtest ever to return to one
beginning. I am he, that teach-
eth

eth man all knowledge, and do give to little ones a more clear understanding, then can be taught by man. He therefore, to whom I speak, shall quickly be wise, and shall profit much in spirit. Wo be to them, that inquire many curious things of men, and do little desire to know the way how to serve me. The time will come, when the Master shall appear, Christ the Lord of Angels; to hear the lessons of all, that is, to examine the consciences of every one: And then he will search *Hierusalem* with a candle, and the hidden things of darknes shall be laid open, and the inventions of tongues shall be silent.

3. I am he that in an instant doth raise up the humble mind; to understand more reasons of everlasting truth, then can be gotten by ten years study in schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without

286 *The following* .

without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments. I am he that teacheth to despise Earthly things, to loath things present, to seek the everlasting, to delight in the things that are eternal, to fly honours, to suffer scandals, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things fervently to love me.

4. For one by loving me entirely, learned divine things, and spake wonders : he profited more in forsaking all things, then in studying subtilities. To some I speak ordinary things, to others, things more especial ; to some I appear sweetly by signs and figures, but to some I reveal mysteries with much light. The voice of books is one, but it teacheth not all men a like. For I am the internal Teacher, I am the Truth, the searcher of the heart, the understander of thoughts,

thoughts, the setter forwards of good words, distributing to every one according to my will.

C H A P. XLIV.

*Of not drawing outward things
to our selves.*

SOn, in many things thou oughtest to be ignorant, and esteem thy self as dead upon Earth; and as one to whom the whole world is crucified. Thou must also pass over many things with a deaf ear, and rather think of that, which appertaineth to thy peace. It is more profitable to turn thy eyes from the sight of displeasing things, and to leave unto every one his own opinion, then to strive with contentious words. If thou standest well with God, and considerest his judgments, thou shalt the more easily

288 *The Following*

fily yeild to the will of others.

2. O Lord, to what an estate are we come ! Behold, we bewail a temporal loss, and for a little gain we toil and spare no labour; and the spiritual damage of our soul is forgotten, and hardly at length called to mind. That, which little or nothing profiteth, is always remembred, and that which is chiefly necessary, is negligently passed over, because mans nature carryeth him to external things; and unless he quickly returne unto himself, he lieth drowned in them with delight.

CHAP. XLV.

*That credit is not to be given to
all men : And how prone man
is to offend in words.*

Help me, Lord, in my tribulation, for vain is the defence

sence of man. How often have I been deceived, finding want of faith, where I thought it sure? And how often have I found faith, where I least expected it? It is vain therefore to trust in men; but the safety of the just, O Lord, is in thee. Blessed be thou my God, in all things that befall us. We are weak and inconstant, quickly deceived, and soon changed.

2. Who is he, that is able so warily to keep himself, that he never fall into any deceit or doubt? But he that trusteth in thee, O Lord, and seeketh thee with a pure heart, doth not easily fall; and if he fall into any tribulation, be he never so much inthrall'd, yet he shall quickly be deliver'd or comforted by thee; For thou wilt not forsake him for ever that trusteth in thee. A friend is rare to be found, that continueth faithful in his friends distress:

290 *The following*

distress. But thou, O Lord, thou alone art faithful at all times, and there is none like unto thee.

3. O how wise was that holy soul that said: My mind is firmly settled and grounded in Christ! If it were so with me, then would not humane fear so easily trouble me, nor words move me. Who can foresee all things? Who is able to beware before hand of future evils? If things even foreseen do oftentimes hurt us, how can things unlooked for choose but wound us grievously? But why did I not provide better for myself, miserable wretch: Why also have I so easily given credit to others? But alas we are men, and God knoweth, weak and frail men, although by many we are reputed and called Angels. To whom shall I give credit Lord? To whom but to thee? Thou art the truth that neither dost deceive, nor canst be deceived. And on
the

the other side, every man is a liar, weak, unconstant, and subject to fall, especially in words: And therefore we must not easily give credit even to that, which in outward shew seemeth at the first a certain truth.

4. O with how great wisdom hast thou warned us to take heed of men! And because the enemies of man are his familiar and domestical acquaintance, not to trust, if one should say: Behold here, or behold there. I am taught to my cost, and I would to God I might thereby encrease my care, and not my folly. Be wary, saith one, be wary, keep unto thy self what I tell thee: And whilst I hold my peace, and think it is secret, he cannot keep that secret, which he desired should be secret, but presently discloseth me and himself, and goeth his way. From such tales, and such improvident people,
pro-

292 *The Following*

protect me, Lord, that I fall not into their hands, nor ever commit such errors. Give me grace, my God, to observe truth and constancy in my words, and remove far from me a deceitful tongue. What I am not willing to suffer, I ought by all means to avoid.

5. O how good and quiet a thing it is to be silent, and not to talk of others, nor to believe all that is said, nor easily to report what we have heard ; to lay ones self open to few ; always to seek after thee, the beholder of the heart ; not to be carried about with every wind of words, but to desire that all things both within and without, be accomplished according to thy will and pleasure ? How secure is it for the keeping of heavenly grace, to fly the sight of men ; and not to seek those things, that seem to cause admiration abroad, but to follow
that

that with all diligence, which bringeth amendment of life, and end encrease of fervour !

6. To how many hath vertue, known and overhastily commended, been hurtful ? How profitable hath grace been, kept with silence in this mortal life, which is nothing but a perpetual temptation, and a warfare ?

CHAP. XLVI.

Of putting our trust in God, when evil words arise.

SOn, be constant, and put thy trust in me, For what are words, but words ? They pass through the air, but hurt not. If thou be guilty, determine willingly to amend thy self: if thou be innocent, resolve to suffer this willingly, at least for God. It is a small matter to
suffer

294 *The Following*

suffer sometimes a few words, thou hast not yet the courage to endure stripes. And why do small matters go to thy heart, but for that thou art yet carnal, and regardest men more then thou oughtest? Because thou art afraid to be despised, therefore thou wilt not be reprehended for thy faults, and thereby seekest shadows of excuses.

2. But look better into thyself and thou shalt see, that the world yet liveth in thee, and a vain desire to please men. For when thou refusest to be humbled, and reprov'd for thy faults, it is surely evident, that thou art neither truly humble, nor dead to the World, nor the World perfectly crucified to thee. But give diligent ear to my words, and thou shalt little respect ten thousand words spoken by men. Behold, if all should be spoken against thee that could be made

mal

maliciously invented, what would it hurt thee, if thou sufferedst it to pass, and madest no reckoning at all of it? Could all those words pluck as much as one hair from thy head?

3. But he that hath not his heart within him, nor God before his eyes, is easily moved with every little dispraise; when as he that trusteth in me, and confideth, not in his own judgment, shall be free from humane fears. For I am the Judge and the discerners of all secrets. I know how the matter passed: I know him that offereth the injury, and him that suffereth it. From me hath this word proceeded: This hath happened by my permission; that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. I shall judge the guilty, and the innocent; but by a secret Judgement I would before hand try them both.

4. The testimony of men of-

ica-

296 *The following*

tentimes deceiveth : My judgement is always true; it shall stand, and not be overthrown. It is commonly hidden and secret, and not known in every thing, but to few: notwithstanding it never erreth, neither can it erre, although to the eyes of the foolish it seems not right. Men ought therefore to return to me in every judgement, and not to stand in their own opinions. For the just man will not be troubled, whatsoever happeneth unto him for God: And if any thing be wrongfully brought forth against him, he will not much care, neither will he vainly be glad, if by others he be with reason excused. For he considereth that I am he that searcheth the heart and reines, and do judge not according to the outward face, nor humane appearance. For that is oftentimes found culpable in my sight, that in the judgement of men is commendable.

5. O Lord my God , the just Judge, strong and patient, thou knowest the frailty and perversity of man ; be thou my strength, all my trust, for my own conscience sufficeth me not. Thou knowest that which I cannot reach unto , and therefore in every reprehension I ought to have submitted my self, and to have born it patiently : Vouchsafe mercifully to pardon me, as often as I have failed herein, and give me again grace of greater sufferance. For thy bountiful mercy is more available to me for the obtaining of pardon, then my conceived justice for the defence of my hidden conscience. Although my conscience accuse me not, yet I cannot hereby justify my self ; for if thy mercy be away, no man living shall be justified in thy sight.

C H A P. XLVII.

*That all grievous things are to be
endured for life everlasting.*

SOn, let not the pains dismay thee which thou hast undertaken for me, neither be thou discomfited for the tribulations which do befall thee; but let my promise strengthen and comfort thee in all events. I am able to reward thee above all measure. Thou shalt not long toil here, nor always be oppressed with grief. Attend a while, and thou shalt see a speedy end of thy evils. There will come an hour when all labour and trouble shall cease. Little and short is all that passeth away with time.

2. Do as thou doest; labour faithfully in my vineyard; I will be thy reward. Write, read, sing,
mourn,

Of Christ. Lib. III. 299

mourn, observe silence, pray, suffer crosses manfully : Life everlasting is worthy of all these and greater combats. Peace shall come in the day which is known unto our Lord, and it shall not be day nor night, to wit, of this time, but everlasting light, infinit brightness, stedfast peace, and secure rest. Then thou shalt not say : Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? Nor cry, woe unto me, for that my dwelling in a strange country is prolonged ! For death shall be thrown down, and health shall be without decay ; no anxiety ; blessed joy, sweet and glorious company.

3. O if thou hadst seen the everlasting crowns of the Saints in Heaven, and with how great glory they now rejoyce, who in times past were contemptible to this World, and esteemed unworthy of life it self ; truly thou wouldest presently humble thy self even

300 *The following*

unto the Earth : And wouldest rather seek to be under the feet of all, then to have command, so much as over one : Neither wouldest thou desire pleasant days of this life, but rather rejoyce to be afflicted for God, and esteem it thy greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. O if thou hadst a feeling of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depth of thy heart, how durst thou so much as once to complain ! Are not all painful labours to be endured for everlasting life ? It is no small matter to lose or to gain the Kingdom of Heaven. Lift up thy eyes therefore unto Heaven : Behold I, and all my Saints with me, who in this World had great conflicts, do now rejoyce, now are comforted, now are secure, now do rest, and shall remain with me everlastingly in the Kingdom of my Father.

CHAP.



C H A P. XLVIII.

*Of the everlasting day, and
shortness of this life.*

O Most blessed mansion of the Heavenly City! O most clear day of Eternity, which night obscureth not, but the highest truth ever enlightneth; day ever pleasant, ever secure, and never changing into contrary state! O that that day would once appear, and all these temporal things were at an end! To the Saints it shineth glistering with everlasting brightness, but to those, that are Pilgrimes upon Earth, it appeareth only a far off, and as it were through a glass.

2. The inhabitants of Heaven do know how joyful that day is: But the banished Children of *Eve*

302 *The following*

bewail the bitterness and tediousness of this. The days of this life are short and evil, full of sorrow and anguish; where man is defiled with many sins, incumbered with many passions, disquieted with many fears, filled with many cares, distracted with many curiosities, intangled with many vanities, compassed about with many errors, worn away with many labours, vexed with temptations, weakned with delights, tormented with want.

3. O when shall these evils be at an end! When shall I be delivered from the miserable bondage of sin! When shall I think, O Lord, of thee alone! When shall I perfectly rejoyce in thee! When shall I be free from all impediments in true liberty, without all grief of mind and body! when shall I have firm peace, peace secure, and without trouble, peace within and without,
peace

peace every way assured ! O good Jesu when shall I stand to behold thee ! When shall I contemplate the glory of thy Kingdom ! When wilt thou be unto me all in all things ! O when shall I be with thee in thy Kingdom, which thou hast prepared for thy beloved, from before all Worlds ! I am left a poor and banished man in the land of enemies, where there are dayly wars, and great misfortunes.

4. Comfort my banishment, assuage my sorrow ; for my whole desire sendeth up sighs unto thee. For all is burdensome to me, whatsoever this World offereth for my comfort. I desire familiarly to enjoy thee, but I cannot attain unto it. I would gladly fix my heart to the things of Heaven, but temporal cares and unmortified passions weigh me down. In mind I would be above all things, but to my flesh

304 *The following*

I am inforced to be subject against my will. Thus unhappy man that I am, I fight against my self, and am become grievous to my self, whilst my spirit seeketh after the things that are above, and my flesh that which is below.

5. O what do I inwardly suffer, when in mind I consider Heavenly things, and presently in my prayers a multitude of fleshly fantasies present themselves before me! My God, be not far from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy servant. Cast forth thy lightning, and disperse them: Send out thy darts, and break all the fantasies of my enemy. Gather my senses together unto thee, make me forget the things of this World: Grant me grace to cast away speedily the fantasies of vices, Succour me, O everlasting truth, that no vanity may move me. Come Heavenly sweetness and let all impurity fly from thy face.

Pardon

Pardon me also, and mercifully forgive me as often as I think upon any thing else besides thee in Prayer. I truly confess, that I am wont to be subject to many distractions: for Oftentimes I am not there, where I do corporally stand, or sit, but rather there, whither my thoughts do carry me. Where my thought is, there am I: There is oftentimes my thought; where my affection is. That quickly occurreth unto me, which is naturally delightful, and by custome pleasing.

6. And for this cause, thou that art truth it self, hast plainly said: Where thy treasure is, there is also thy heart. If I love Heaven, I willingly think of heavenly things. If I love the World, I rejoyce at the felicity of the World, and grieve for the adversity thereof. If I love the flesh, I imagine oftentimes those things, that are pleasing to the flesh: If

306 *The following*

I love the spirit, I delight to think of spiritual things. For whatsoever I love, thereof do I willingly speak, and hear, and carry home with me the forms and representations thereof. O blessed is that man, that for thee, O Lord, forsaketh all creatures; that violently resisteth nature, and out of the fervour of spirit crucifieth the concupiscences of the flesh: That with a clear conscience he may offer sincere Prayers unto thee, and be worthy of the company of Angelical quiers, all Earthly things outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

C H A P. XLIX

Of the desire of everlasting life, and how great rewards are promised to those that fight valiantly.

SOn, when thou perceivest the desire of everlasting bliss to be

be given thee from above, and desirest to depart out of the Tabernacle of this body, that thou maist without shadow of any interchange behold my light; open thy heart, and receive this Holy inspiration with thy whole desire. Give great thanks to the heavenly goodness, that dealeth with thee so favourably, visiteth thee mercifully, stirreth thee up fervently, holdeth thee up powerfully, lest through thy own weight thou fall down to the vanities of the Earth. Neither doest thou obtain this by thy own thought or endeavour, but by the only favour of heavenly grace and divine bounty, that thou maist profit in vertue, and obtain greater humility, and prepare thy self to future battels, and endeavour to cleave unto me with the whole affection of thy heart, and serve me with a fervent desire.

2 Son, fire often burneth.

P 6

but

308 *The following*

but the flame ascendeth not up without smoke: So likewise the desires of some men are earnestly carried to heavenly things, and yet they are not free from temptation of carnal affection: And therefore it is not altogether purely for the honour of God that which they so earnestly request of him. Such is also oftentimes thy desire, which with such importunity thou presentest unto me. For that is not pure and perfect, which is infected and defiled with the love of thy own proper commodity and interest.

3. Ask not that which is delightfome and profitable to thee, but that which is grateful to me, and appertaineth to my honour; for if thou judgest aright, thou oughtest to prefer and follow my appointment, rather then thy own desire, or any desired thing: I know thy desire, and have heard thy often grones. Now thou
wouldest

wouldest be in the freedom of the glory of the Sons of God ; Now doth the everlasting habitation, and the heavenly Country full of joy delight thee, but this hour is not yet come : It is yet another time, to wit, of war, time of labour and tryal. Thou desirest to be filled with the chiefest good, but thou canst not attain it for the present. I am he, saith our Lord, expect until the Kingdom of God doth come.

4. Thou art yet to be tryed upon Earth, and to be exercised in many things. Comfort shall be sometimes given thee, but abundant fulness thereof shall not be granted. Take courage therefore, and be constant as well in doing, as in suffering things contrary to nature. Thou oughtest to put on a new man, and to be changed into another. Thou must oftentimes do that which thou wouldest not, and leave undone what

310 *The following.*

what thou wouldest do. That which is pleasing to others, shall go well forwards: That which thou wishest, shall not speed. That which others say, shall be nothing regarded. Others shall ask, and shall receive, thou shalt ask and not obtain.

5. Others shall be great in the praises of men, but of thee there shall be no speech; to others this or that shall be committed, but thou shalt be accounted fit for nothing. At this nature will sometimes repine, and it is much if thou endurest it with silence. In these and such like, a faithful servant of our Lord is wont to be tryed, how he can deny and overcome himself in all things. There is scarce any thing, wherein thou hast such need to mortify thy self, as in seeing and suffering those things that are contrary to thy will, especially when that is commanded, which seemeth unto thee incon-

inconvenient, or to little purpose. And for that thou being placed under authority, darest not resist a higher power, therefore it seemeth hard unto thee, to walk at the beck of another, and to leave wholly thy own opinion.

6. But consider, Son, the fruit of these labours, the end near at hand, and the reward above all measure, and thou shalt receive no grief thereby, but great comfort of thy patience. For in regard of that little of thy will, which now thou willingly forfakest, thou shalt always have thy will in heaven. There thou shalt have all that thou wilt, or canst desire: There thou shalt enjoy all good without fear of losing it; there shall thy will be ever one with me; it shall desire nothing, strange or private; there no man shall withstand thee, no man complain of thee, no man hinder thee, nothing come against thee;

312 *The Following*

thee : But all things desired shall be there together present, and delight thy whole desire, and fulfil it to the highest degree : There will give thee glory for the reproach which here thou sufferedst; a garment of praise for former grief; for the lowest place, a seat of an everlasting kingdom; there shall the fruit of obedience appear, the labour of penance rejoyce, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned.

7. Now therefore bow thy self with great humility under the hands of all, and regard not who said, nor commanded this; but take great heed, that whether thy Superiour, or thy inferiour, or thy equal require any thing of thee, or do insinuate their desire, thou take it all in good part, and endeavour to fulfil it with a sincere intention. Let one seek this, another that; let him glory in this, the other in that, and be praised

praised a thousand thousand times; but do thou neither rejoyce in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thy self, and in my pleasure and honour alone. This art thou to wish, that whether by life or death, God may be always glorified in thee.

C H A P. L.

How a desolate person ought to offer himself into the hands of God.

Lord God, Holy Father, thy holy name be now and for ever blessed; because as thou wilt, so is it done, and what thou doest, is good. Let thy servant rejoyce in thee, not in himself, nor any things else, for thou alone art the true gladness, thou art my joy and my honour, O Lord. What hath thy servant, but what he hath received from thee, even without

314 *The following*

without any desert of his? Thine is all that thou hast given, and whatsoever thou hast made. I am poor, and in labours from my youth: And sometimes my soul is heavy even unto tears, sometimes also it is troubled in it self, by reason of passions which rise against her.

2. I desire the joy of peace, I crave the peace of the children that are fed by thee in the light of comfort. If thou give peace, if thou infuse holy joy, the soul of thy servant shall be full of heavenly sweetness, and shall become devout in thy praise: But if thou withdraw thy self, as very often thou art wont, he will not be able to run the ways of thy commandments, but rather he boweth his knees, and knocketh his breast, for that it is not with him, as it was yesterday, and the day before, when thy light shined upon his head, and he was protected
under

under the shadow of thy wings, from the temptations which violently assaulted him.

3. O righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is come, that thy servant is to be proved! Behold Father, it is fit that in this hour thy servant suffer something for thee. O Father worthy of eternal honour, the hour is come, which from all eternity thou didst foreknow should come; that for a short time thy servant should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly live for ever with thee: He should be a little despised, and humbled, and made as an abject in the sight of men, and much afflicted with passions and infirmities, that he may rise again with thee, in the rising of new light, and be clarified in heaven. Holy Father, thou hast so appointed it, and wilt have it so: And this is fulfilled which thou thy self hast commanded.

4. It

316 *The Following*

4. It is a grace and a favour to thy friend to suffer, and to be afflicted in the world for the love of thee, how often soever, by whomsoever thou permittest it to fall upon him. Without thy counsel and providence, and without cause nothing is done upon Earth. It is good for me, Lord, that thou hast humbled me, that I may learn thy righteous judgments, and cast away all haughtiness of heart and presumption. It is profitable to me, that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seek comfort from thee, then from men. I have learned also hereby to dread thy inscrutable judgement, that afflicteth the just with the wicked, but not without equity and justice.

5. I give thee thanks, that thou hast not spared my sins, but hast worn me away with bitter stripes, inflicting sorrows, and sending grief within and without.

There

There is none under Heaven that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heavenly Physician of souls, that strikest and healest, bringest into Hell, and drawest out again? Let thy rod instruct me.

6. Behold, beloved Father, I am in thy hands, I bow my self under the rod of thy correction: Let my neck and shoulders feel the stripes of thy chastisement, that my crookedness may be conformed to thy will. Make me a devout and humble disciple of thine, as thou art wont well to do, that I may be ready at every beck of thy divine pleasure. I commend my self and all mine unto thee to be corrected. It is better to be rebuked here, then hereafter. Thou knowest all and every thing, and there is nothing hidden in the conscience of man, which can be hidden from thee. Before things are done, thou knowest

318 *The Following*

knowest that they will happen, and hast no need that any should teach thee, or admonish thee of those things, which are done on Earth. Thou knowest what is expedient for my good, and how much tribulation is fit for purging the rust of my sins. Do with me according to thy desired pleasure, and despise not my sinful life, better and more clearly known to none then to thee alone.

7. Grant me, O Lord, to know that which is to be known, to love that which is to be beloved, to praise that which pleaseth thee most: To esteem that which is precious unto thee, to despise that which is contemptible in thy sight: Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the exteriour eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men; but to determine of visible and spiritual things with a true judgment, and
above

above all things ever to search after thy will and pleasure.

8. The senses of men are often deceived in their judgements; the lovers of the World are also deceived in loving only visible things. What is a man the better, for that he is esteemed great by man? The deceitful man deceiveth the deceitful, the vain the vain, the blind deceiveth the blind, and one feeble likewise another, whilst he exaltem and praiseth him. For how much every one is in thy sight, so much he is, and no more, saith humble *S. Francis.*

C H A P. LI.

*That a man ought to imploy himself
in works of Humility, when force
is wanting for higher exercises.*

SOn, thou art not able always
to continue in the fervent
desire

320 *The Following*

desire of vertue, nor to persist in the high pitch of contemplation; but thou must sometimes of necessity, by reason of original corruption, descend to inferiour things, and bear the burden of this corruptible life even against thy will, and with irksomnes. As thou carriest a mortal body, thou shalt feel trouble and heaviness of heart. Thou oughtest therefore in flesh oftentimes to bewail the burden of flesh: For that thou canst not always persevere in spiritual exercises, and divine contemplation.

2. It is then expedient for thee to fly to humble and exterior works, and to refresh thy self with good vertuous actions, to expect with a firm confidence my coming, and heavenly visitation, to bear patiently thy banishment, and the driness of thy mind, till thou be visited again by me, and delivered from all anxiety: For,

I will make thee forget thy former pains, and enjoy inward quietness. I will lay open before thee the pleasant fields of holy Scripture, that with an enlarged Heart thou maist begin to run the way of my Commandments. And thou shalt say, that the sufferings of this time are not condign to the Glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.

C H A P. LII.

That a Man ought to esteem himself unworthy of comfort, and to have deserved stripes.

LOrd, I am not worthy of thy comfort, nor of any spiritual visitation, and therefore thou dealest justly with me, when thou leavest me poor and desolate. For if I could shed Tears like a Sea, yet I were not worthy
Q of

322 *The following*

of thy comfort. For (alas) I deserve nothing, but to be scourged and punished, in that I have grievously and often offended thee, and sinned in many things. All things therefore duly considered, I am not worthy even of the least comfort. But thou, mild and merciful God, who wilt not that thy works do perish, to shew the riches of thy goodness in the vessels of mercy, even beyond his desert, vouchsafest to comfort thy Servant above humane measure. For thy comforts are not like to the vain words of Men.

2. What have I done, O Lord, that thou shouldest impart any Heavenly comfort unto me? I remember not that I have ever done any good, but have been always prone to sin, and sloathful in my amendment. It is true, and I cannot deny it. If I should say otherwise, thou wouldest stand against me, and there would be
none

none to defend me. What have I deserved for my sins, but Hell and everlasting Fire? I confess in the truth of my Heart, that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt, and it is unfit that I should be remembered amongst thy devout Servants. And although I be unwilling to hear this, yet notwithstanding for the love of truth, I will lay open my sins against myself, that I may the better deserve to obtain thy mercy.

3. What shall I say being guilty, and full of confusion? I can utter out of my Mouth no other word, but this; I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned, have mercy on me: pardon me, suffer me a little, that I may bewail my grief, before I goe unto the Land of darkness, and be covered with the shadow of Death. What dost thou require of a guilty and miserable sinner, but that he be contrite and sorrowful, and to hum-

324 *The following*

ble himself for his offences? In true contrition and humbleness of Heart, is bred a hope of forgiveness; a troubled conscience is reconciled again, grace lost is restored, Man is defended from future wrath, and God and the penitent Soul meet together in the holy kiss of peace.

4. Humble contrition for sins is an acceptable Sacrifice unto thee, O Lord, favouring much sweeter in thy sight then burning Frankincense. This is also the pleasant Oyntment, which thou wouldest have pouered upon thy sacred Feet: For thou never despisest a contrite and humble Heart. There is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of our Enemy: There is amended, and washed away whatsoever uncleanness hath been elsewhere gathered, and whatsoever is defiled.

CHAP.

C H A P. LIII.

*That the grate of God is not given
to those that savour of Earthly
things.*

SOn, my grace is precious, it suffereth not it self to be mingled with external things, nor Earthly comforts. Thou oughtest therefore to cast away all hindrances of grace, if thou desire to receive the infusion thereof. Choose therefore a secret place to thy self, love to live alone with thy self, desire the conversation of none: but rather pour out devout Prayers unto God, that thou maist keep thy mind compunct, and thy conscience pure. Esteem the whole World as nothing, prefer my Service before all outward things: for thou canst not attend unto me, and be

326 *The Following*

delighted also in transitory vanities. Thou oughtest to sequester thy self from thy acquaintance and friends, and to keep thy mind deprived of all temporal comfort. So the blessed Apostle *Peter* required, that the faithful of Christ should keep themselves as Strangers and Pilgrims in this World.

2. O how great a confidence shall he have at the hour of death, whom no affection to any Earthly thing detaineth in the World. But the weak mind is not yet capable of so retired a Heart; neither doth the fleshly person understand the freedome of a recollected mind. Notwithstanding if he will be truly Spiritual, he ought to renounce as well that which is far off, as that which is nearest unto him, and to beware of no Man more then of himself. If thou perfectly overcome thy self, thou shalt with more ease subdue the rest. It is a glorious victory

victory to triumph over our selves* For he that keepeth himself subject in such sort, that his sensuality be subdued to reason, and reason in all things be obedient to me, he is truly a conquerer of himself, and Lord of the World.

3. If thou desire to mount unto this height of perfection, thou must begin manfully; and set the Axe to the root, that thou maist pluck up and destroy thy hidden and inordinate inclination to thy self, and unto all private and Earthly good. Of this vice (that Man too inordinately loveth himself) almost all dependeth, whatsoever is wholly to be overcome; which being once overcome and subdued, there will presently ensue great peace and tranquility. But for that few endeavour perfectly to die unto themselves, and to forsake themselves wholly, therefore they remain intangled in themselves, and cannot be lifted up in

328 *The following*

Spirit above themselves: but he, that desireth to walk freely with me, it is necessary that he mortifie all his inordinate affections, and not adhere unto any creature by private love.

C H A P. LIV.

Of the different motions of Nature, and Grace.

SOn, mark diligently the motions of thy own nature, and my grace, for in very contrary and secret manner these are moved, and can hardly be discerned but by him that is Spiritual and inwardly enlightened. All Men desire that which is good, and pretend some good in all their words and deeds; and therefore under pretence of good, many are deceived. Nature is deceitful and seduceth, intangleth, and

and deceiveth many, and always proposeth her self for her end; but grace walketh with great sincerity, and avoideth all shew of evil, pretendeth not deceits, and doth all things purely for God, in whom also she finally resteth.

2. Nature will not willingly die, nor be kept in, nor overcome, nor be subject to any, nor be subdued: But Grace laboureth for self-mortification, resisteth sensuality, seeketh to be subject, is willing to be overcome, and will not use her own liberty: She loveth to be kept under discipline, and desireth not to rule any, but always to live and remain wholly subject unto God, and for God is ready humbly to bow unto all Men. Nature striveth for her own commodity, and considereth what profit she may reap by another: But Grace considereth not what is profitable and commodious unto her self, but rather what

is profitable to many. Nature willingly receiveth honour and reverence: But Grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory unto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt, but Grace rejoyceth to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. Nature loveth idleness, and bodily rest, but Grace cannot be idle, but willingly imbraceth labour. Nature seeketh to have those things that be curious and precious, abhorreth that which is mean and base: But Grace delighteth in plain and humble things, despiseth not course and mean, nor refuseth to wear that which is old and torn. Nature respecteth the things of this World, rejoyceth at Earthly gain, sorroweth for loss, is moved with every little injurious word; but Grace thinketh on that which is Everlasting, and cleaveth not to that which fadeth with time; she

is not troubled with loss, nor exasperated with injuries, for that she hath placed her treasure and joy in Heaven, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is covetous and doth more willingly receive then give; she loveth proper and private things: But Grace is pittiful and liberal to all; avoideth singularity, is content with a little, thinketh it happier to give, then to receive. Nature inclineth to Creatures, yieldeth to her own Flesh, followeth Vanities, and listeneth to Discourses: But Grace draweth unto God, and seeketh after Vertues, renounceth Creatures, flieth the World, hateth desires of the Flesh, restraineth wandring abroad, blusheth to be seen in publick. Nature is willing to have some outward comfort, wherein she may delight her senses: But Grace seeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth

above all visible things in the highest good.

5. Nature worketh all for her own gain and profit, she can do nothing freely, but for bestowed benefits: She hopeth to obtain either that which is equal, or better, either praise or favour, and coveteth to have her works and gifts much esteemed: But Grace seeketh no temporal things, nor asketh any other reward for her deserts then God alone, nor desireth more of temporal necessities, then what may serve her for the obtaining of everlasting Glory.

6. Nature rejoyceth to have many friends, and kinsfolks, she glorieth of noble birth and descent, pleaseth the powerful, fawneth upon the rich, applaudeth those that are like her self: But Grace loveth her Enemies, and is not puffed up with multitude of friends, nor esteemeth place or birth,

birth, but where it is joyned with greater vertue; she rather fauoureth the poor, then the rich, hath more compassion of the innocent, then the powerful, rejoyceth in the simple, and respecteth not the deceitful, exhorteth ever the good to labour for the better gifts, and by vertue to resemble the Son of God. Nature quickly complaineth of any want and trouble: Grace constantly suffereth all kind of need.

7. Nature turneth all things to her self, striveth and contendeth for her self: But Grace reduceth all to God, from whence originally they proceed: She ascribeth no good to her self, neither doth she arrogantly presume, of her selfe: She contendeth not, nor preferreth her opinion before others, but in every sense and understanding submitteth her self unto the eternal wisdom, and to the Divine judgement. Nature

334 *The Following*

ture coveteth to know secrets, and to hear news, she will appear abroad, and make proof of many things by the experience of her own senses; she desireth to be known, and to do those things, for which she may be praised and admired: But Grace careth not for hearing news, nor to understand curious matters, for that all this springeth from the ancient disorder of our corrupt nature, seeing nothing that is new, is durable upon Earth. She teacheth therefore to restrain the senses, to avoid vain pleasing and ostentation, humbly to hide those things that are worthy of praise and admiration, and of every thing and every knowledge to seek profitable fruit, and the praise and honour of God: She will not have her self nor hers publicly praised, but desireth that God should be blessed in his gifts, who of meer charity bestoweth all things.

8. This

8. This grace is a supernatural light, and a certain special gift of God, and the proper mark of the elect, and pledge of everlasting Salvation, which lifteth up a Man from Earthly baseness to love Heavenly things, and of a Carnal maketh him a Spiritual person. How much the more therefore nature is depressed and subdued, so much the greater grace is infused, and the inward Man daily by new visitations more perfected, according to the Image of God.

C H A P. LV.

Of the corruption of Nature, and efficacy of Divine Grace.

MY God, who of thy meer goodness hast Created me to thy Image and likeness, grant me this Grace which thou hast shewed

336 *The Following*

shewed to be so great, and so necessary to Salvation, that I may overcome my wicked nature, which draweth me to sin, and to the loss of my Soul. For I feel in my Flesh the law of sin, contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive, to obey sensuality in many things: Neither can I resist the passions thereof, unless thy Holy Grace fervently infused into my Heart, do assist me.

2. Thy Grace, O Lord, and great Grace is needful, ~~that~~ Nature may be overcome, which is ever prone to evil from her youth. For by *Adam* the first Man, it falling and being corrupted by sin, the penalty of this stain hath descended upon all Mankind, in such sort, that Nature it self, which by thee was Created good, and without defect, is now accounted for vice, and for the infirmity of a corrupted Nature, for
that

that the motion thereof left unto it self, draweth to evil and abject things. For the little force which remaineth, is like a certain spark, lying hidden in ashes. This is natural reason it self, compassed about with great darkness, still retaining power to discern good and evil, and the distance between true and false, although it be unable to fulfill all that it approveth, and enjoyeth not now the full light of truth, nor the former integrity of her affections.

3. Hence it is, my God, that according to my inward Man I delight in thy law, knowing thy commandments to be good, just, and holy; reprovng also all evil and sin, and do know that it is to be fled. But in my Flesh I serve the law of sin, whilst I rather obey sensuality then reason. Hence it is, that I have a will to do good, but know not how to perform it. For this cause I often
purpose

338 *The Following*

purpose many good things, but for that I want grace to help my infirmity, for a light resistance go back, and faint. I know the way of perfection, and see clearly enough what I ought to do, but pressed with the weight of my own corruption, I rise not unto it.

4. O Lord, how needful is thy grace for me, to begin any good work, to go forward, and to accomplish it. For without it I can do nothing, but in thee I can do all things, when thy grace doth comfort me. O heavenly grace, without which our own merits are nothing, and no gifts of nature are to be esteemed. Arts, riches, beauty, and strength, wit, or eloquence are of no worth with thee, O Lord, without thy grace. For gifts of nature are common to good and evil, but the peculiar gift of the elect is grace and love, wherewith being marked,

marked, they are esteemed worthy of everlasting life. This grace so much excelleth, that neither the gift of prophecy nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation, how high soever, is of any esteem without it. Neither faith, nor hope, nor other vertues are acceptable unto thee without charity and grace.

5. O most blessed grace, that makest the poor in spirit rich with vertues, and the rich in many blessings, humble in heart, come down unto me, replenish me in the morning with thy comfort, lest my soul should faint with weariness, and wither away with driness of mind. I beseech thee, Lord, that I may find grace in thy sight, for thy grace sufficeth, though other things that nature desireth be wanting. If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not fear evils whilst thy grace is with me : She

340 *The Following*

is my strength, she giveth advice and help, she is stronger then all enemies, and wiser then all the wise.

6. Thy grace is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline the light of the heart, the solace in affliction: She driveth away sorrow, she expelleth fear, she is the nurse of devotion, the bringer forth of tears. What am I without it, but a rotten piece of wood, and an unprofitable stalk only fit for the fire? Let thy grace therefore, Lord, always prevent me, and follow me, and make me ever diligent in good works, through Jesus Christ thy Son. Amen.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

*That we ought to deny our selves,
and imitate Christ, by the Cross.*

SOn, look how much thou
canst go out of thy self, so
much maist thou enter into
me. As to be void of all desire of
external things, maketh inward
peace; so the forsaking of our
selves joyneth us internally to
God. I will have thee learn the
perfect leaving of thy self unto
my will, without contradiction
and complaint. Follow me, I am
the way, the truth, and the life.
Without the way there is no go-
ing, without truth there is no
knowledge, without life there is
no living. I am the way which
thou oughtest to follow, the
truth which thou oughtest to trust,
the life for which thou oughtest

342 *The following*

to hope. I am the way which cannot lead amiss, the truth which cannot err, the life which cannot end. I am a most strait way, a supream truth, a true life, a blessed life, an increated life. If thou remain in me, thou shalt know the truth, and truth shall deliver thee, and thou shalt apprehend everlasting life.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: If thou wilt know the truth, believe me. If thou wilt be perfect, sell all. If thou wilt be my Disciple, deny thy self. If thou wilt possess a blessed life, despise this present life. If thou wilt be exalted in Heaven, humble thy self upon Earth. If thou wilt reign with me, bear the Cross with me. For only the servants of the Cross find the way of blis and true light.

3. Lord Jesus, forasmuch as thy way is narrow, strait and con-

contemptible unto the World, grant me grace to imitate thee in suffering willingly all worldly contempt: For the servant is not greater then his Lord, nor the Disciple above his Master. Let the servant be exercised in thy Holy life, for there is the health and the true sanctity of my soul: Whatsoever I read or hear besides, doth not recreate or delight me fully.

4. Son, now that thou knowest and hast read these things, happy shalt thou be, if thou fulfil them. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and I will love him, and will manifest my self unto him, and will make him sit with me in the Kingdom of my Father. Lord Jesus, as thou hast said and promised, so give me grace to deserve, that it be fulfilled. I have received the Cross, I have received it from thy hand,
and

344 *The following*

and I will bear it, and bear it till death, as thou hast laid it upon me. Truly the life of a good religious person is the Cross; and it is a sure guide to Heaven. It is now begun, it is not lawful to go back, neither is it fit to leave that which I have undertaken.

5. Let us then take courage, my Brethren, and go forward, together. Jesus will be with us: for Jesus sake we have undertaken this Cross: for the love of Jesus let us persevere in the Cross. He will be our helper, who is our guide and forerunner. Behold our King goeth before us, who also will fight for us: let us follow him cheerfully, let us not be dismayed, but be ready to die with courage in the battel, and let us not blemish our glory by flying from the Cross.

CHAP.

CHAP. LVII.

*That a man should not be too much
dejected, when he falleth into
some defects.*

SOn, patience and humility in
time of adversity, are more
pleasing to me, then much
comfort and devotion in prosperi-
ty. Why art thou grieved for e-
very little trifle spoken and done
against thee? Altho it had been
much more, thou oughtest not to
have been moved. But now let
it pass, it is not the first that hath
happened, nor any new thing,
neither shall it be the last, if thou
live long. Thou art cheerful e-
nough, as long as no adversity
occurrerh, Thou canst give good
counsel also, and canst strengthen
others with thy words, but when
any tribulation suddainly knock.

R

eth

346 *The following*

eth at thy door, thou art destitute of counsel, and void of force. See therefore thy great frailty, which thou often provest in every small occasion. It is notwithstanding permitted for thy good, when these and such like occasions befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy heart the best thou canst, and if it touch thee, yet let it not deject thee, nor trouble thee long: bear it at least patiently, if thou canst not joyfully. Although thou be unwilling to hear it and feelest in thy heart some motion of disdain, yet repress thy self, and suffer no inordinate word to pass out of thy mouth, which may be a scandal to the weak. The storm which now is raised, shall quickly be appeased, and inward grief shall be asswaged by the return of grace. I do yet live, saith our Lord, and am ready to help thee, and to give thee greater comfort then before,
if

if thou put thy trust in me, and callest devoutly upon me.

3. Be more patient, and prepare thy self to greater suffering. All is not lost, if thou feel thy self often afflicted, or grievously tempted. Thou art a man, and not God: Thou art flesh, not an Angel. How canst thou look to continue ever in the same state of vertue, when an Angel in Heaven hath fallen, and the first man in Paradise lost his standing? I am he that do give healthful comfort to them that mourn; and do raise up unto my God-head those that know their own frailty.

4. Lord, blessed be thy sacred word, more sweet unto my mouth then the hony, and the hony-comb. What should I do in these my so great tribulations and anguish, unless thou didst comfort, me with thy holy, sweet, and heavenly speeches? What matter is it, how much, and what I suf-

348 *The following*

fer, so as I may at length attain to the Haven of bliss? Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this World. Be mindful of me, my God, and direct me the strait and ready way to thy everlasting Kingdom, *Amen.*

C H A P. LVIII.

Of not searching into high matters, and into the secret judgements of God.

SOn, beware thou dispute not of high matters, nor of the secret judgements of God, why this man is forsaken, and he assumed to so great grace: Why also this man so much afflicted, and he so greatly advanced. These things exceed all humane power, neither can any reason or discourse of any man search out the judge-

judgement of God. When the enemy therefore suggesteth these things unto thee, or some envious people demand them of thee, answer that of the Prophet: Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgement is right. And again: The judgements of our Lord are true and justified in themselves. My judgements are to be feared, not to be discussed, for they are such as cannot be comprehended by the understanding of man.

2. In like manner I advise thee not to inquire, nor dispute of the merits of the Saints, which of them is holier then the other, and which is greater in the Kingdom of Heaven. These things oftentimes breed strife and unprofitable contentions: They nourish also Pride and vain glory, from whence do usually spring envy and dissensions, whilst one will needs foolishly have this Saint preferred, and the other, another.

To desire to know and search out such things, is to no purpose, but to displease the Saints, of whom they speak. For I am not the God of dissension, but of peace which peace consisteth rather in true humility, then in exalting our selves.

3. Some are carried with zeal of affection, to love these, or those most: But this love is rather humane then divine. I have made all the Saints, and have given them grace: I have made them partakers of my glory. I know the merits of every one, I have prevented them in the benedictions of my sweetness. I foreknew my beloved before the beginning of the World. I chose them out of the World, they chose not me first. I called them by grace, I drew them by mercy, I led them through sundry temptations. I have sent them great inward comforts, I have given them

them perseverance, I have crowned their pateriences.

4. I know the first and last : I embrace all with inestimable love. I am to be praised in all my Saints: I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in every one, whom I have thus gloriously exalted, and predestinated without any precedent merits of their own. He therefore that contemneth one of the least of my Saints, honour-eth not the greatest ; for that I made both the less and the greater. And he that dispraiseth any of my Saints, dispraiseth also me, and all the rest in the Kingdom of Heaven. All are one by the band of Charity ; they think the same, they will the same, and are all knit together in one perfect band of love.

5. But yet (which is much more high) they love me more then themselves, and more then their own merits. For being ra-

352 *The following*

vished above themselves, and drawn out of the affection of themselves, they tend wholly unto the love of me, in which also they rest, enjoying me with unspeakable glory. Nothing can put them back, nothing press them down; for being full of everlasting truth, they burn with the fire of unquenchable charity. Let therefore carnal and earthly men, that can affect no other but private joyes, forbear to dispute of the state of Saints, They add and take away according to their own fancies, not as it pleaseth the everlasting truth.

6. There is in many, great ignorance, specially in those that be slenderly enlightned, and these can seldom love any with perfect spiritual love. They are alwayes much drawn by a natural affection, and humane friendship to this man or to that, and according to the experience they have of themselves

selves in their earthly affections, so they frame an imagination of heavenly things. But there is an incomparable distance between the things, which the imperfect frame in their conceits, and those which illuminated persons do see by revelation from above.

7. Beware therefore, my Son, that thou treat not curiously of these things, which exceed thy knowledge, but rather so apply thy endeavours, that thou maist at least have the meanest place in the Kingdom of heaven. And if any one did know which of the Saints exceedeth others in sanctity, or is esteemed great in the Kingdom of heaven, what would this knowledge avail him, unless he should thereby humble himself the more in my sight, and stir up his mind to praise my name with greater fervour. His labour is much more acceptable unto God, that thinketh of the greatness of

354 *The following*

his sins, and his want of vertues, and how far off he is from the perfection of the Saints; then he that disputeth of their greatness. It is better to pray to the Saints with devotion and tears, and to crave their glorious suffrages with an humble mind, then to search their secrets with vain curiosity.

8. They are well, and right well contented, if men could content themselves and refrain from these vain discourses. They glory not of their own merits; for they ascribe no good unto themselves, but attribute all to me, who of my infinite charity have bestowed by blessings upon them. They are replenished with so great love of my God-head, and so superabundant joy, that there is no glory nor happiness, that is, or can be wanting unto them. All the Saints how much the higher they be in glory, so much the more humble they are in themselves,

selves, and nearer unto me. And therefore thou hast it written, That they did cast their Crowns before God and fell down upon their face before the Lamb, and adored him that liveth for ever.

9. Many inquire who is greatest in the Kingdom of God; that know not whether they shall ever be numbered there amongst the least. It is no small matter to be even the least in heaven, where all are great: for that all there shall be called, and shall be indeed the Sons of God. The least there shall be great among thousands, and the sinner of a hundred years shall die. For when the Disciples asked who was the greater in the Kingdom of heaven, they received this answer: Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this

356 *The following*

little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of heaven.

10. Wo be unto them that disdain to humble themselves willingly with little children. For the low gate of the Kingdom of heaven, will not give them entrance. And wo be to the rich, that have their comforts here, for whilst the poor enter into the Kingdom of God, they shall be wanting without. Rejoyce you that be humble: and you that be poor be you glad, for yours is the Kingdom of God, if you walk according unto truth.

C H A P. LIX.

That all our hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.

LOrd, what trust have I in this world? Or what is the greatest comfort, that all things

things under heaven doe yield me?
Is it not thou, my Lord God,
whose mercies are without num-
ber? Where hath it been well
with me without thee? Or when
could it be ill with me, when thou
wert present? I had rather be
poor for thee, then rich without
thee. I rather choose to be a
Pilgrim on earth with thee, then
to possess heaven without thee.
Where thou art, there is heaven:
and there is death and hell, where
thou art not. Thou art my de-
fire, and therefore it behoveth me
to send forth deep sighs from my
heart, and cry and pray unto thee.
For I have none to trust unto, none
that can help me in time of ne-
cessity, but thee alone, my God.
Thou art my hope, and my trust;
thou art my comforter, and most
faithful unto me in all my dis-
tresses.

2. All men seek their own
gain, thou only seekest my salva-
tion

358 *The following*

tion and my profit, and turnest all things to my good. Although thou permitest many temptations to assault me, and many adversities to befall me, yet thou ordainest all this to my good and profit; who art wont to prove thy beloved servants a thousand wayes. In which proof thou oughtest no less to be loved and praised, then if thou didst replenish me with heavenly comforts.

3. In thee therefore, my Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge: In thee I place my tribulation and anguish, for I find all to be weak and unconstant, whatsoever I behold out of thee. For neither can many friends avail, nor forcible helpers aid, nor wise counselours give profitable answer, nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any secrets, or pleasant place defend, if thou thyself doest not assist, help, comfort,

fort, instruct, and keep us.

4. For all things that seem to be ordained for the rest and solace of man, when thou art absent, are nothing and do bring indeed no joy, nor comfort at all. Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, the light of life, the depth of wisdom; And the most forcible comfort of thy servants, is to trust in thee above all things. To thee therefore do I lift up my eyes: In thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my whole trust. Bless and sanctify my soul with thy heavenly blessings, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the seat of thy eternal glory: And that nothing may be found in the Temple of thy greatness, that may offend the eyes of thy Majesty. According to the greatness of thy goodness, and multitude of thy mercies, take pity upon me, and hear the prayer of thy poor servant,

360 *The Following*

vant, who is far exiled from thee
in the land of the shadow of
death. Protect, and keep the
soul of thy servant, amidst so ma-
ny dangers of this corruptible
life, and by the assistance of thy
grace, direct it in the way of peace,
to the Country of everlasting
light. *Amen.*

The End of the third Book:

OF THE
FOLLOWING
OF
CHRIST.

The Fourth B O O K.

*A devout Exhortation unto
Holy Communion.*

The voice of Christ.

C Ome unto me all ye that
labour and are burdened,
and I will refresh you,
saith our Lord. The bread which
I will give, is my Flesh, for the
Life

362 *The Following*

Life of the World. Take ye and Eat, this is my Body that shall be delivered for you. Do this for the commemoration of me. He that Eateth my Flesh, and Drinketh my Blood, remaineth in me, and I in him. The words which I have spoken unto you, are Spirit and Life.

C H A P. I.

*With how great reverence Christ
ought to be received.*

THese are thy words, O Christ, everlasting Truth, though not spoken all at one time, nor written in one and the self same place. Because therefore they are thine and true, they are all thankfully and faithfully to be received by me. They are thine, and thou hast spoken them, and they are mine also, because thou
hast

nd
all
is
e
d
h
s
hast spoken them for my Salvation. I willingly receive them from thy Mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my Heart. These devout words so full of sweetness and love, do stir me up, but my own offences do amaze me, and my impure conscience driveth me back from the receiving so great Mysteries. The sweetness of thy words doth encourage me, but the multitude of my sins do oppress me.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee: And to receive the food of Immortality, if I desire to obtain everlasting Life and Glory. Come saist thou, unto me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. O sweet and lovely word in the Ear of a sinner, that thou my Lord God shouldest invite the poor and needy to receive thy most blessed Body. But who am I,
Lord,

364 *The following*

Lord, that I may presume to approach unto thee? Behold the Heavens cannot contain thee, and thou saist: Come ye all unto me.

3. What meaneth this most pious benignity, and so loving invitation? How shall I dare to come that know not any good in me, whereupon I may presume? How shall I bring thee into my House, that have often offended thy most gracious countenance? The Angels and the Archangels honour thee, the Saints and just Men do fear thee; and thou saist: Come ye all unto me. Unless thou, O Lord, didst say it, who would believe it to be true? And unless thou didst command it, who would dare to come unto thee? Behold *Noah* a just Man laboured a hundred years in the building of the Ark, that he might be saved with a few: And how can I in one hours space pre-
pare

pare my self to receive with reverence the maker of the World?

4. *Moses* thy great Servant and especial Friend, made an Ark of incorruptible Wood, which also he covered with most pure Gold, to put the Tables of the Law therein: and I a rotten Creature, how shall I so lightly dare to receive the maker of the Law, and the giver of Life? *Soloman* the wisest of the Kings of *Israel*, bestowed Seven years in building a magnificent Temple, in praise of thy Name, and celebrated the feast of the Dedication thereof Eight days together: He offered a Thousand peaceable Sacrifices, and set the Ark in the place prepared for it, with the sound of Trumpets, and of joy; and I the most unhappy and poorest of Men, how shall I bring thee into my House, that can scarce spend one half hour devoutly? I would to God it were once almost one hal. hour,
in

366 *The following.*

in worthy and due manner !

5. O my God, how much did they endeavour to please thee, and alas how little is that which I do ? How short time do I spend, when I prepare my self to receive . I am seldome wholly recollected, very seldome altogether free from distraction; and yet surely no undecent thought should occur in the presence of thy Deity, nor any Creature draw me unto it : For I am not to harbour an Angel, but the Lord of Angels.

6. And yet there is great difference between the Ark and the Reliques thereof, and thy most pure Body with his unspeakable vertues : Between those legal Sacrifices, figures of future things, and the true Sacrifice of thy Body, the complement of all ancient Sacrifices. Why therefore do I not become more fervent in thy venerable Presence ? Wherefore

do

do I not prepare my self with greater care to receive thy Sacred gift, since those Holy ancient Patriarcks, and Prophets, yea Kings also and Princes, with the whole people have shewed so great zeal of Devotion to thy divine Service.

7. The most devout King *David* danced before the Ark of God with all his force, calling to mind the benefits bestowed in times past upon his Forefathers. He made Instruments of sundry kinds, he published Psalms, and appointed them to be Sung with joy : himself also oftentimes played upon the Harp. Being inspired with the Grace of the Holy Ghost, he taught the people of *Israel* to praise God with their whole Heart, and with pleasant voices every day to bless and praise him. If so great devotion was then used, and such memory of divine praise before the
Ark

368 *The following*

Ark of the Testament, what reverence and devotion is now to be performed by me, and all Christian people in the presence of this Sacrament, in receiving the most precious body of Christ?

8. Many go to sundry places to visit the Reliques of Saints, and are astonished when they hear of their miraculous works: They behold the spacious buildings of their Churches, and kiss their sacred bones wrapped in silk and gold And behold thou art here present with me on the Altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the Maker of all things, and Lord of Angels. Oftentimes in those devotions there is but curiosity of men, and novelty of the beholders in the seeing of such sights, and little fruit of amendment is gotten thereby, especially where there is so unconstant wandring without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the Altar, thou

thou art present, my Lord, God and Man, Christ Jesus, where also plentiful fruit of everlasting salvation is obtained, as often as thou art worthily, and devoutly received. No levity, nor curiosity, or sensuality draweth unto this, but firm faith, devout hope, and sincere charity.

9. O God the invisible Creator of the World, how wonderfully dost thou deal with us! How sweetly and graciously dost thou dispose of all things with thy elect, to whom thou offerest thyself to be received in the Sacrament! O this exceedeth all understanding of man! This chiefly draweth the hearts of the devout, and inflameth their desire. For thy true faithful servants, that dispose their whole life to amendment, by this most worthy Sacrament, oftentimes receive great grace of devotion and love of vertue.

370 *The Following*

10. O admirable and hidden grace of this Sacrament, which only the faithful of Christ do know : But the unfaithful , and such as are slaves unto sin cannot conceive nor feel. In this Sacrament spiritual grace is given, and lost vertue is restored in the soul : And beauty disfigured by sin, returneth again. This grace is sometimes so great, that with the fulness of devotion, which is here given, not only the mind , but the weak body also feeleth great increase of strength.

11. Our coldness and negligence surely is much to be bewailed and pitied, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receive Christ, in whom all the hope and merit of those that are to be saved doth consist. For he is our sanctification and redemption ; he is the comfort of passengers, and the everlasting fruition of Saints. It is much therefore to be

be lamented that many do so little consider this comfortable mystery, which rejoyceth Heaven, and preserveth the whole World. O blindness and hardness of mans heart, that doth not more deeply weigh the greatness of so unspeakable a gift, but rather comes by the daily use thereof, to regard it little or nothing.

12. For if this most Holy Sacrament should be celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by one only Priest in the World; with how great desire dost thou think would men be affected to that place, and what esteem would they have of such a Priest of Almighty God, by whom they might enjoy the consolation of these divine mysteries? But now there are many Priests, and Christ is offered up in many places, that so the grace and love of God to man may appear so much the greater, how much the more

372 *The following*

this sacred Communion is common through the World. Thanks be unto thee, good Jesu, everlasting Pastour of our souls, that hast vouchsafed to refresh us poor and banished men, with thy precious Body and Blood, and to invite us to the receiving of these mysteries with the words of thy own mouth, saying; Come unto me all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

C H A P. II.

*That great goodness and charity
of God is bestowed upon man,
in this Sacrament.*

The voice of the Disciple.

PResuming of thy goodness
and great mercy, O Lord,
being sick, I approach unto my
Saviour, hungry and thirsty to
the

the fountain of life, needy to the King of Heaven, a servant unto my Lord, a creature to my Creator, desolate to my merciful comforter. But whence is this to me, that thou vouchsafest to come unto me? Who am I that thou shouldest give thy self unto me? How dare a sinner presume to appear before thee? And thou, how dost thou vouchsafe to come unto a sinner? Thou knowest thy servant, and seest that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou shouldest bestow this benefit upon him. I confess therefore my unworthiness, and I acknowledge thy goodness; I praise thy mercy, and give thee thanks for this thy unspeakable charity. For thou dost this for thy own goodness, not for any merits of mine, to the end that thy goodness may be better known unto me, thy charity more abundantly shewed, and thy humility more highly

374 *The following*

commended. Since therefore it is thy pleasure, and thou hast commanded that it should be so, this thy bounty is also pleasing to me, and I do wish that my offences may be no hindrance.

2. O most sweet and bountiful Jesu, how great reverence and thanks, with perpetual praise is due unto thee for the receiving of thy sacred body, whose worth and dignity no man is able to express! But what shall I think of at this time, now that I am to receive this divine Sacrament, and to approach unto my Lord, to whom I am not able to give due reverence, and yet I desire to receive him devoutly? What can I think better, and more profitable, than to humble my self wholly before thee, and to exalt thy infinite goodness above me? I praise thee my God, and will exalt thee for ever: And I do despise, and submit my self unto thee,

thee, even into the depth of my unworthiness.

3. Behold thou art the Holy of Holies, and I the skum of sinners! Behold thou bowest thy self down unto me, who am not worthy so much as to look up unto thee. Behold thou comest unto me! It is thy will to be with me, thou invitest me to thy banquet. Thou wilt give me the food of Heaven, and bread of Angels to eat, which is no other truly then thy self, the lively bread, that descendest from Heaven, and givest life unto the World.

4. Behold from whence this love proceedeth! What kind of favour and benignity is this which shineth upon us! What thanks and praises are due unto thee for these benefits. O How good and profitable was thy counsel, when thou ordainedst it! How sweet and pleasant the banquet when thou gavest thy self to be our
S 4 food!

376 *The Following*

food! How wonderful thy work
O Lord, how powerful thy virtue,
how unspeakable thy truth! For thou
saidst the word, and all things were
made; and this was done which thou
commandest.

5. A thing of great admiration,
and worthy of faith, and surpassing
the understanding of man, that thou,
my Lord God, true God and Man,
shouldest be whole contained under a
small form of bread and wine, and
shouldest be eaten by the receiver
without being consumed. Thou, who art
the Lord of all things, and standest
in need of none, hast pleased to dwell
in us by means of this thy Sacrament:
Preserve my heart and body unspotted,
that with a cheerful and pure conscience
I may often celebrate thy mysteries,
and receive them to my everlasting
health, which thou hast chiefly ordained
and instituted for thy honour, and
perpetual memory.

Rejoyce

Rejoyce my soul, and give thanks unto God for so noble a gift, and singular comfort left unto thee in this vale of tears. For as often as thou callest to mind this mystery, and receivest the body of Christ; so often dost thou work the work of thy redemption, and art made partaker of the merits of Christ. For the charity of Christ is never diminished, and the greatness of his mercy is never lessened. Therefore thou oughtest always to dispose thy self hereunto by a fresh renewing of thy mind, and to weigh with attentive consideration this great mystery of thy salvation. So great, new, and joyful it ought to seem unto thee, when thou sayest, or hearest Mass, as if the same day Christ first descending into the womb of the Virgin, were become man; or hanging on the cross, did suffer and dye for the salvation of mankind.

C H A P. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

BEhold, O Lord, I come unto thee, that I may be comforted in thy gift, and be delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O Lord, hast prepared in thy sweetness, for the poor. Behold in thee is all whatsoever I can, or ought to desire: Thou art my health, and my redemption, my hope, and my strength, my honour, and my glory. Make joyful therefore this day, the soul of thy servant, for that I have lifted it up to thee my sweet Jesus, I desire to receive thee now with devotion, and reverence. I do long to bring thee into my house, that with *Zacheus* I may deserve to be blessed by thee, and numbred,

of Christ. Lib. IV. 379

number'd, amongst the children of *Abraham*. My soul thirsteth to receive thy body, my heart desireth to be united with thee.

2. Give thy self to me, and it sufficeth. For besides thee no comfort is available. I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy visitation. And therefore I must often come unto thee, and receive thee as the only remedy of my health, lest perhaps I faint in the way, if I be deprived of thy Heavenly food. For so, most merciful Jesus, thou once didst say, preaching to the people, and curing sundry diseases: I will not send them home fasting, lest they faint in the way. Deal thou therefore in like manner, now with me, who hast vouchsafed to leave thy self in the Sacrament for the comfort of the faithful. For thou art the sweet refection of the soul, and he that eateth thee worthily, shall be partaker, and
hei

380 *The following*

heir of everlasting glory. It is necessary for me, that do so often fall and sin, so quickly wax dull and faint, that by often prayers and confession, and receiving of thy sacred body, I renew, cleanse, and inflame my self; lest perhaps by long abstaining I fall from my holy purpose.

3. For man is prone unto evil from his youth, and unless this divine remedy help him, he quickly slideth to worse. This holy Communion therefore draweth back from evil, and comforteth in good. For if I be now so often slack and negligent when I communicate, or say Mass, what would become of me, if I received not this remedy, and sought not after so great a help; Though every day I be not fit, nor well prepared to say Mass, I will endeavour notwithstanding at convenient times to receive the divine mysteries, and make my self
partaker

of Christ. Lib. IV. 381

partaker of so great a grace. For this is the only chief comfort of a faithful soul, whilst she wandreth from thee in this mortal body, that being mindful of her God, she often receive her Beloved with a devout mind.

4. O wonderful benignity of thy mercy towards us, that thou, Lord God, the Creator and giver of life to all spirits, do'st vouchsafe to come unto a poor soul, and with thy whole God-head and Humanity to replenish her hunger. O happy mind, and blessed soul, that deserveth to receive thee, her Lord God, with devout affection, and in receiving of thee to be filled with spiritual joy! O how great a Lord doth she entertain! How beloved a guest doth she harbour! How pleasant a companion doth she receive! How faithful a friend doth she accept! How beautiful and noble a spouse doth she embrace! She embraceth him

382 *The following*

him who is to be loved above all that is beloved and all things that may be desired. Let Heaven and Earth and all their beauty be silent in thy presence. For what beauty and praise soever they have, it is received from thy bounty, and shall not equal the beauty of thy name, of whose wisdom there is no end.

C H A P. IV.

That many benefits are bestowed upon them that communicate devoutly.

The voice of the Disciple.

MY Lord God, prevent thy servant in the blessings of thy sweetness, that I may deserve to approach worthily and devoutly to thy holy Sacrament : Stir up my heart unto thee, and deliver me from all heaviness and sloath :

boath: Visit me with thy comfort, that I may taste in spirit thy sweetness, which plentifully lyeth hid in this Sacrament, as a fountain. Give light also to my eyes to behold so great a mystery, and strengthen me to believe it with undoubted faith. For it is thy work, and not mans power, thy sacred institution, not mans invention. For no man is of himself able to comprehend and understand these things, which surpass the understanding even of Angels. What therefore shall I unworthy sinner, dust and ashes, be able to search and comprehend of so high and sacred a mystery?

2. O Lord, in sincerity of heart, with a good and firm faith, and at thy commandment, I come unto thee with hope, and reverence, and do verily believe, that thou art here present in the Sacrament, God and Man. Thy holy pleasure is, that I receive thee, and by charity

384 *The following*

charity do unite my self unto thee. Wherefore I do recur unto thy Clemency, and do crave special grace, that I may wholly melt in thee, and abound with love, and hereafter never admit any external comfort. For this most high and worthy Sacrament is the health of the soul and body, the remedy of all spiritual sickness: By it my vices are cured, my passions bridled, temptations overcome or weakened, greater grace infused, virtue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and charity inflamed and enlarged.

3. For thou hast bestowed, and still oftentimes dost bestow many benefits in this Sacrament upon thy beloved that receive it devoutly, my God the Protector of my soul, the strengthener of humane frailty, the giver of all inward comfort. Thou impartest unto them much comfort against sundry tribulations, and liftest them
up

of Christ. Lib. IV. 385

up from the depth of their own baseness, to the hope of thy protection, and dost inwardly refresh and illustrate them with a certain new grace, in such sort, that they, who before Communion felt themselves heavy and indisposed, afterwards being strengthened with heavenly meat and drink, do find in themselves a great change to the better. Which thou dost so dispose to thy elect, that they may truly acknowledge, and patiently prove, how great their own infirmity is, and what benefit and grace they receive from thee. For they of themselves are cold, dull, and undevout; but by thee they are made fervent, quick, and full of devotion. For who is there, that approaching humbly unto the fountain of sweetness, doth not carry away from thence at least some little sweetness? Or who standing by a great fire, receiveth not some small heat thereby?

by? Thou art a fountain always full and overflowing, a fire ever burning and never decaying.

4. Wherefore if I cannot draw at the full out of this fountain, nor drink my fill, I will notwithstanding set my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduit, that I may draw from thence at least some small drop to refresh my thirst; to the end I wither not wholly away and perish. And though I be not altogether celestial, nor inflamed as the Cherubins and Seraphins, notwithstanding I will endeavour to apply myself to devotion, and dispose my heart to obtain some small spark of divine fire by humble receiving of this life-giving Sacrament. And whatsoever is hereunto wanting in me, good Jesu, most blessed Saviour, do thou supply for me, most benign and gracious Lord, who hast vouchsafed to call us unto thee, saying: Come unto me
all

of Christ. Lib. IV. 387

all yee that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

5. I labour in the sweat of my brows, I am vexed with grief of heart, I am burdened with sins, I am troubled with temptations, I am intangled and oppressed with many evil passions, and there is none to help me, none to deliver and save me, but thou, O Lord, my Saviour, to whom I commit my self, and all mine, that thou maist keep me, and bring me to life everlasting. Receive me to the honour and glory of thy name, who hast prepared thy Body and Blood to be my meat and my drink. Grant, Lord God, my Saviour, that by frequenting thy misteries, my zeal and devotion may increase.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

*Of the dignity of this Sacrament,
and Priestly function.*

The voice of the Disciple.

IF thou hadst Angelical purity,
and the Sanctity of S. *John*
Baptist, thou wert not worthy to
receive, nor handle this Sacra-
ment. For it is not within the
compass of the deserts of men,
that man should consecrate and
handle the Sacrament of Christ,
and receive for food the bread of
Angels. A great mystery, and
great is the dignity of Priests, to
whom is granted that which is
not permitted to the Angels. For
Priests only instituted in the
Church, have power to celebrate,
and consecrate the body of Christ.
The Priest is the Minister of God,
using

using the words of God, by Gods commandment and appointment, but God is there the Principal author, and invisible worker, to whom is subject all that he pleaseth, and all that he commandeth, doth obey.

2. Thou oughtest therefore to give more credit to God Almighty in this most excellent Sacrament, then to thy own sense, or to any visible sign. And therefore thou art to come unto this Mystery with fear and reverence. Consider attentively with thy self, what that is, whereof the Ministry is delivered unto thee by the imposition of hands of the Bishop. Behold thou art made a Priest, and consecrated to say Mass: See now that in due time thou offer Sacrifice unto God faithfully and devoutly, and carry thy self so, as thou maist be without reproof. Thou hast not lightned thy burden, but art now bound with a
straiter

390 *The following*

straiter band of discipline, and art obliged to a more perfect degree of sanctity. A Priest ought to be adorned with all kind of vertue, and to give example of good life to others. His conversation should not be according to the ordinary and common proceedings of men, but like to the Angels in heaven, or to perfect men on earth.

3. A Priest cloathed in sacred garments is the Vicegerent of Christ, to pray humbly, and with a prostrate mind unto God for himself and the whole people. He hath before and behind the sign of the Cross of our Lord, to the end he may ever remember the Passion of Christ: He beareth the Cross before him in the Vestment, that he may diligently behold the footsteps of Christ, and fervently endeavour to follow them, He is behind marked with the Cross, that he may patiently suffer

suffer for God whatsoever adversities shall be laid upon him by others. He beareth the cross before, that he may lament his own sins : And the same he hath also behind, that he may with a compassionate heart bewail the offences of others, and know that he is placed as a mediatur between God, and the sinner. Neither ought he to cease from prayer and holy oblation, till he deserve to obtain grace and mercy. When a Priest doth celebrate, he honoureth God, rejoyceth the Angels, edifieth the Church, helpeth the living, giveth rest to the dead, and maketh himself partaker of all good deeds.

C H A P. IV.

*An Interrogation of the exercise
before Communion.*

The voice of the Disciple.

WHen I weigh thy greatness, O Lord, and my unworthiness, I tremble, and am confounded in my self. For if I come not unto thee, I fly from life; and if I unworthily intrude my self, I incur thy displeasure. What therefore shall I do, my God, my helper, and my counsellour in necessity:

2. Teach me the right way, appoint me some brief exercise suitable to this holy mystery of sacred Communion. For it is good for me to know, how I should reverently and devoutly prepare my heart unto thee, for
the

the profitable receiving of thy Sacrament, or for the celebrating of so great and divine a Sacrifice,

C H A P. VII.

Of the discussing of our own conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voice of the Beloved.

Above all things, the Priest of God ought to come to celebrate, handle, and receive this Sacrament with great humility of heart, and lowly reverence, with a full faith, and a Godly desire of the honour of the divine Majesty. Examine diligently thy conscience, and to thy power purge and cleanse it with true contrition, and humble confession: So as there may be nothing in thee, that may be burdensome unto thee

T

394 *The following*

thee, or that may breed in thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free access to these heavenly mysteries. Repent thee of all thy sins in general and in particular bewail thy daily offences. And if thou hast time; confess unto God in the secret of thy heart, all the miseries of thy disordered passions.

2. Lament and grieve, that thou art yet so subject to sensuality, and so addicted to the world, so unmortified in thy passions, so full of the motions of concupiscence, so unwatchful over thy outward senses, so often intangled with many vain fantasies: So vehemently inclined to outward things, so negligent in the interior, so prone to laughter and immodesty, so hard to tears and compunction, so prompt to ease and pleasures of the flesh, so dull to austerity and fervour, so curious to hear news and see vain sights,

fights, so slack to imbrace that which tends to thy own humiliation and contempt, so covetous of abundance, so niggardly in giving, so fast in keeping, so inconsiderate in speech, so unbridled to silence, so loose in manners, so outrageous in deeds, so greedy to meat, so deaf to the word of God, so hasty to rest, so slow to labour, so watchful to tales, so drowsy to watch in the service of God, so hasty to the end thereof, so inconstant in attention, so negligent in saying thy office, so undavout in saying Mass, so dry in receiving, so quickly distracted, so seldom wholly recollected, so suddainly moved to anger, so apt to take displeasure against another, so prone to judge, so severe to reprehend, so joyful in prosperity, so weak in adversity, so often purposing much good, and performing little.

3. These and other thy defects

396 *The following.*

confessed, and bewailed with sorrow and great dislike of thy own infirmity, make a firm purpose always to amend thy self, and to go forwards in vertue. Then with full resignation, and with thy whole will offer thy self up to the honour of my name, a perpetual sacrifice in the altar of thy heart, faithfully committing thy body and soul unto me, that thou maist so also deserve to come worthily to offer sacrifice unto God, and to receive profitably the Sacrament of my body.

4. For there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater, for the washing away of sins, then to offer up our selves unto God purely and wholly with the oblation of the body of Christ in the Mass, and in Communion. And when a man shall have done what lieth in him, and shall be truly penitent; I live, saith our Lord, who will not the death of a sinner, but

but rather that he be converted and live: I will not remember his sins any more, but they shall be all forgiven him, and fully pardoned.

CHAP. VIII.

*Of the oblation of Christ on the
Cross, and resignation of our
selves.*

The voice of the beloved.

AS I willingly offered up my self unto God my Father, with my hands stretched forth on the Cross, and my body naked for thy sins, so that nothing remained in me that was not turned into a sacrifice, for the appeasing of the divine wrath, so oughtest thou also to offer up thy self willingly unto me daily in the Mass, as a pure and holy oblation, with thy

398 *The following*

whole force and desire, in as hearty a manner as thou canst. What do I require of thee more, then that thou resign thy self wholly unto me ? Whatsoever thou givest besides thy self, is of little account in my sight, for I seek not thy gift, but thee.

2. As it would not suffice thee to have all things whatsoever besides me ; so neither can it please me whatsoever thou givest, if thou offerest not up thy self. Offer thy self unto me, And give thy self, and all that thou art for God, and thy offering shall be grateful. Behold I offered up my self wholly unto my Father for thee, and gave my whole body and blood for thy food, that I might be wholly thine, and thou, remain mine. But if thou abidest in thy self, and doest not offer thy self up freely unto my will ; thy oblation is not entire, neither shall the union between us be perfect.

of Christ. Lib. IV. 3

fect. Therefore a free offering up of thy self into the hands of God, ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtain freedom and grace. For this cause so few become inwardly illuminated, and enjoy true liberty of heart, for that they do not resolve wholly to deny themselves. My saying is undoubtedly true : Unless one forsake all, he cannot be my Disciple. If thou therefore wish to be mine, offer up thy self unto me with thy whole desires.

C H A P. IX.

That we ought to offer up our selves, and all that is ours unto God, and to pray for all.

The voice of the Disciple.

Thine, O Lord, are all things that are in heaven, and in Earth.

400 *The Following*

Earth. I desire to offer up my self unto thee, as a free oblation, and to remain always thine. O Lord, in sincerity of my heart I offer my self unto thee this day, in sacrifice of perpetual praise, to be thy servant for ever. Receive me with this holy oblation of thy precious body, which in the presence of the Angels invisibly attending here upon thee, I offer up this day unto thee, that it may be to the health of my soul, and the salvation of all thy people.

2. I offer unto thee, O Lord, all my sins, and offences, which I have committed in thy sight, and in the sight of thy holy Angels, from the day wherein I first could sin, to this hour, upon thy holy Altar; that thou maist consume and burn them all with the fire of thy charity, and wash out all the stains of my sins, and cleanse my conscience from all offence, and restore to me again thy grace, which



which I lost by sin, forgiving me all my offences, and receiving me mercifully in the kiss of peace.

3. What can I do for my sins, but humbly confess and bewail them, and intreat always for mercy without intermission? I beseech thee, hear me in my abundant mercy, when I stand before thee my God. All my sins are very displeasing unto me. I will never commit them any more; but I am sorry, and will be sorry for them as long as I live, and am ready to do penance, and to satisfy for them to the uttermost of my power. Forgive me, O God, forgive me my sins for thy holy names sake; save my soul which thou hast redeemed with thy precious Blood. Behold I commit my self unto thy mercy, I resign my self over into thy hands. Do with me according to thy goodness, not according to my wickedness, and manifold iniquity.

402 *The Following*

4. I offer up also unto thee all whatsoever is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou maist amend and sanctify it, that thou maist make it grateful and acceptable unto thee, and always perfect more and more that which thou hast begun, and bring me also, who am a sloathful and unprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer up also unto thee all the Godly desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents, and friends, my brethren and sisters, and of all those that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to me or to others for thy love, and that have desired me to say Mass, and pray for them; and all others, whether they be yet alive, or already dead: That they all may receive the help of thy grace and comfort, protection from dangers, delivery from pain, and being freed from all evils, may
joyfully

joyfully give worthy thanks to thee.

6. I offer up also unto thee my prayers, and sacrifices, especially for them who have in any thing wronged, grieved, or slandered me, or have done me any damage or displeasure; and for those also, whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, and scandalized by words, or deeds, wittingly, or at unawares: That it may please thee to forgive us all our sins, and offences, one against the other. Take, O Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, and indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may hurt Charity, and weaken brotherly love. Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave thy mercy: give grace unto them, that stand in need thereof, and grant that we may be worthy to enjoy thy grace, and attain to life everlasting. *Amen.*

C H A P. X.

*That the holy Communion is not
lightly to be forborn.*

The voice of the Beloved.

THou oughtest often to have recourse to the Fountain of grace, and of divine mercy, to the Fountain of goodness, and of all piety, that thou maist be cured of thy sins and passions, and deserve to be made more strong and vigilant against all temptations and deceits of the Devil: The enemy knowing the greatest profit, and remedy to consist in the holy Communion, endeavoureth by all means, and occasions to withdraw and hinder faithful and devout persons from it.

2. Some, when they purpose to receive the sacred Communion, suffer

suffer greatest assaults of the Devil. For that wicked spirit (as is written in *Job*) cometh amongst the Sons of God, to trouble them with his accustomed malice and impiety, or to make them over fearful and perplexed, that so he may diminish their affection, or by subtile assaults, take away their faith, to the end they may either altogether abstain from this divine food, or at least come unto it with less devotion. But there is no heed to be taken of his frauds and malicious suggestions, be they never so filthy and hideous, but all is to be turned back upon his own head. We ought to contemn and scorn him, miserable wretch, and not to omit the sacred communion for his assaults, and the troubles which he raiseth.

3. Oftentimes also an excessive care for the obtaining of devotion and a certain anxiety for the
the

406 *The Following*

the making of our Confession hindreth us. Follow in these occasions the counsel of the wise, and put away all anxiety and scruple; for it hindreth the grace of God, and overthroweth devotion. Omit not for every small vexation of the mind which happeneth, to receive this holy Sacrament, but go presently to confession, and willingly forgive others, whatsoever offences they have done against thee: And if thou hast offended any, humbly crave pardon, and God will willingly forgive thee.

4. What availeth it to delay confession, and to defer receiving? Purge thy self with speed, spit out the venome presently, make hast to take a remedy, and thou shalt find it better, then if thou deferred'st it long. If thou omittest it to day for this cause, perhaps to morrow some greater will fall out, and so thou maist be
hindred

hindred a long time from these divine mysteries, and become more unfit. Stir up thy self, and shake off all heaviness and sloth with the greatest force and speed thou canst. For it profiteth nothing to continue long in disquietness and trouble of mind, and for daily occurring impediments to withdraw thy self from the Sacraments. Yea it hurteth very much to defer Communion long, for it is wont to breed a great and dangerous dulness. Alas! Some cold and dissolute people, do willingly delay their confession, and do therefore defer the sacred Communion, lest they should be bound to greater watch over themselves.

5. O how little charity and weak devotion have they that so easily omit the receiving of these holy mysteries? How happy is he and grateful to God, who ordereth so his life, and keepeth his conscience in such purity, that he
may

408 *The Following*

may be ready, and fit to communicate every day, if it were convenient, and might be done without note. If any one sometimes abstains out of humility, or by reason of some lawful impediment, he is to be commended for the reverence which therein he sheweth. But if it proceedeth of coldness, he must stir himself up, and do what lieth in him, and God will prosper his desire, for the good will he hath to do it, which God doth chiefly respect.

6. And when any lawful hindrance doth happen, he must always have yet a good will, and loving desire to communicate, and so shall he not lose the fruit of the Sacrament. For a devout person may every day and hour profitably and without let receive Christ spiritually: And yet on certain dayes, and at times appointed he ought to receive Sacramentally with a reverent desire the
body

body of his Redeemer, and rather seek the honour and glory of God, then his own comfort. For he communicateth mystically and is invisibly fed, as often as he devoutly calleth to mind the mystery of the Incarnation, and the Passion of Christ, and is inflamed with his love.

7. He that prepareth not himself, but when a feast draweth near, and when custom compelleth him thereunto, shall often be unprepared. Blessed is he that offereth himself up as an Holocaust and burnt offering to our Lord, as often as he doth celebrate or communicate. Be not too long nor too short in saying Mass; but keep the accustomed manner of those with whom thou livest. Thou oughtest not to be tedious and troublesome to others, but to observe the common course according to the appointment of thy Superiours:
And

410 *The following*

And rather frame thy self to the profit of others, then to thy own devotion or desire.

C H A P. XI.

That the Body of Christ, and the holy Scriptures, are most necessary unto a faithful soul.

The voice of the Disciple.

O Most sweet Lord Jesu, how great is the delight of a devout soul that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is no other meat offered to be eaten, but thy self her only beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart. And verily it would be a great comfort unto me, to pour out tears from the bottom of my heart in thy presence, and with devout *Magdalen* to wash thy feet with the tears of my

of Christ Lib. IV. 411

my eyes. But where is this devotion? Where is so plentiful shedding of holy tears? Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy Angels, my whole heart should be inflamed and dissolve into tears for joy. For I enjoy thee in the Sacrament really present, although hidden under another form.

2. For to behold thee in thy own divine brightness, my eye would not be able to endure it, neither could the whole world stand in the clearness of the glory of thy majesty. Thou therefore providest for my weakness in that thou coverest thy self under the Sacrament. I do really enjoy and adore him, whom the Angels adore in heaven; but I, as yet for the time, in faith; they in his proper form, and without shadow. I ought to be content with the light of true faith, and to walk therein, until the day of everlasting brightness break forth,
and

412 *The Following*

and the shadows of figures pass away. But when that shall come which is perfect, the use of Sacraments shall cease. For the Blessed in heavenly glory need not the remedy of Sacraments, who rejoyce without end in the presence of God, beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed by his brightness into the brightness of the incomprehensible Deity: They tast the word of God made flesh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for ever.

3. Whilst I remember these thy wonderful works, all spiritual comfort whatsoever becometh very tedious unto me: For that as long as I behold not my Lord openly in his glory, I make no account of whatsoever I see or hear in this life. Thou art my witness, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature give me rest, but thou my God, whom

I desire to behold everlastingly. But this is not possible whilst I remain in this mortal life. Therefore I must frame my self to much patience, and submit my self to thee in all my desires. For thy Saints also, O Lord, who now rejoyce with thee in the Kingdom of Heaven, whilst they lived, expected in faith and great patience the coming of thy glory. What they believed, : I believe What they hoped for, I expect : Whither they are come, I trust I shall come by thy grace. In the mean time, I will go forward in faith, strengthened by the examples of the Saints. I have also devout books for my comfort, and for the guide of my life, and above all these, thy most holy Body for a singular remedy and refuge.

4. For I perceive two things to be chiefly necessary for me in this life, without which this miserable life would be insupportable
unto

414 *The following*

unto me. Whilst I am kept in the prison of this body, I acknowledge my self to stand in need of two things, to wit, food, and light. Thou hast therefore given unto me, weak creature, thy sacred Body for the refection of my soul and body; and hast set thy word as a light unto my feet: without these two I could not well live. For the word of God is the light of the soul, and thy Sacrament, the bread of life. These also may be called the two tables set on the one side and the other, in the store house of the holy Church. One is the table of the holy Altar, containing the sacred bread, that is, the precious body of Christ: The other is of the divine law, containing holy doctrine, teaching true faith, and certainly leading to the part of the Temple within the veil, where are the Holy of Holies. Thanks be unto thee Lord Jesus, light of everlasting-

everlasting light, for thy table of holy Doctrine, at which thou serveest us by thy servants, the Prophets and Apostles, and other Doctors.

5. Thanks be unto thee, Creator and Redeemer of man, who to manifest thy charity to the whole world, hast prepared a greater supper, wherein thou hast offered to be eaten, not the mystical lamb, but thy own most sacred Body and Blood, rejoicing all the faithful with thy holy banquet, and replenishing them to the full with the heavenly Cup, in which are all the delights of heaven, and the holy Angels do feast with us, but with a more happy sweetness.

6. O how great and honourable is the offence of Priests, to whom it is granted with sacred words to consecrate the Lord of Majesty, with their lips to bless him, with their hands to hold him,

416 *The Following*

him, with their own mouth to receive him, and to administer him to others ! O how clean ought to be those hands, how pure that mouth, how holy the body, how unspotted the heart of the Priest, in whom the Authour of purity so often entreth ! Nothing but holy, no word but chaste and profitable ought to proceed from the mouth of the Priest, which so often receiveth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chaste ought to be the eyes, that are wont to behold the body of Christ ; the hands pure and lifted up to heaven, that use to handle the Creator of heaven and Earth. Unto the Priests especially it is said in the Law: Be ye holy, for that I your Lord God am holy.

8. Assist us, Almighty God, with thy grace, that we, who have undertaken the office of Priesthood, may serve thee worthily

thily and devoutly in all purity ;
and with a sincere conscience. And
if we cannot live in so great inno-
cency as we ought to do, grant
us notwithstanding in due man-
ner to bewail the sins which we
have committed, and in the spi-
rit of humility, and sincere inten-
tion to serve thee hereafter with
more fervour.

C H A P. XII.

*That he, who is to communicate,
ought to prepare himself with
great diligence.*

The voice of the Beloved.

I Am the lover of purity, and
the giver of all sanctity. I
seek a pure heart, and there
is the place of my rest. Make rea-
dy and adorn for me a great cham-
ber, and I will make with thee
U the

418 *The Following*

the Pasch with my Disciples. If thou wilt have me come unto thee, and remain with thee, purge the old leaven, and make clean the dwelling of thy heart : Shut out the whole world, and all tumult of vices : Sit like a Sparrow solitary upon the house top, and think of thy offences in the bitterness of thy soul. For every lover prepareth the best and fairest room for his beloved, and herein is known the affection of him that entertaineth his beloved.

2. Know thou notwithstanding, that the worth of no action of thine, is able to make this preparation sufficient, although thou shouldest prepare thy self a whole year together, and think on nothing else, but of my mercy and grace only. Thou art suffered to come to my table, like a beggar invited to dinner to a rich man, who hath nothing else to return him for his benefits, but to humble

ble himself, and give him thanks. Do what lieth in thee, and do it diligently; not for custom, nor for necessity, but with fear and reverence, and hearty affection receive the body of thy beloved Lord and God, who vouchsafeth to come unto thee. I am he that have called thee, I have commanded it to be done, I will supply what is wanting in thee: **Come** and receive me.

3. When I bestow the grace of devotion on thee, give thanks to God; for it is given thee, not for that thou deservest it, but because I have mercy on thee. If thou have it not, but rather feel thy self dry, continue in prayer, sigh and knock, and give not over until thou deserve to receive some crum or drop of grace. Thou hast need of me, not I of thee, neither comest thou to sanctify me, but I come to sanctify and make thee better. Thou comest

420 *The following*

that thou maist be sanctified by me and united unto me, that thou maist receive new grace, and be stirred up again to amendment; Neglect not this grace but prepare thy heart with all diligence, and receive thy beloved into thy soul.

4 But thou oughtest not only to prepare thy self to devotion before Communion, but carefully also to conserve thy self therein, after thou hast received the Sacrament. Neither is the careful guard of thy self after less exacted, then devout preparation before. For a good guard afterwards is the best preparation thou canst make for the obtaining again of greater grace, because that mans mind becometh very indisposed, if he presently pour himself out to outward comforts. Beware of much talk, remain in some secret place, and enjoy thy God. For thou hast him whom all the world

of Christ. Lib. IV. 421

world cannot take from thee. I am he, to whom thou oughtest wholly to give thy self, that so thou maist live hereafter, not in thy self, but in me, without all care.

CH A P. XIII.

*That a devout soul ought to desire
with her whole heart to be u-
nited unto Christ in the
B. Sacrament*

The voice of the Disciple.

HOW may I obtain this, O Lord, that I may find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee as my soul desireth? And that no man may look upon me nor any creature move me or respect me, but thou alone maist speak unto me, and I to thee, as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and

422 *The following*

a friend to banquet with his friend. This I pray for, this I desire, that I may be wholly united unto thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things, and more by sacred Communion and often celebrating, learn to tast of heavenly and everlasting sweetness. O Lord God, when shall I be wholly united and absorpt by thee, and altogether forgetful of my self! Thou in me, and I in thee! And so grant us both to continue in one.

2. Thou art my beloved, the choicest amongst thousands, in whom my soul hath taken pleasure to dwell all the days of her life. Thou art my peacemaker in whom is greatest peace, and true rest, without whom is labour and sorrow, and infinite misery. Thou art a hidden God, and thy counsel is not with the wicked, but thy speech is with the humble and simple of heart. O Lord, how sweet

Of Christ. Lib. IV. 423

sweet is thy spirit, who to the end, thou mightest shew thy sweetness towards thy children, vouchsafest to feed them with the most delightful bread, which descendeth from heaven, and is full of all sweetness. Surely there is no other Nation so great that hath Gods approaching unto them, as thou our God art present to all thy faithful, unto whom for their daily comfort, and for the lifting up their hearts to heaven thou givest thy self to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other Nation is there so famous, as the Christian people? Or what creature under heaven so beloved as a devout soul, to whom God himself cometh to feed her with his glorious flesh? O unspeakable grace! O admirable favour! O infinite love, singularly bestowed upon man! But what shall I give unto our Lord in return of this grace, for so singular

424 *The Following*

a charity? There is no other thing more grateful that I am able to give, then to bestow my heart wholly on my God, and to unite it perfectly unto him. Then shall all my bowels rejoyce, when my soul shall be perfectly united unto God. Then he will say unto me; If thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee. And I will answer him: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will be with thee. This is my whole desire, that my heart be united unto thee.

C H A P. XIV.

Of the fervent desire of some devout persons to receive the Body of Christ.

The voice of the Disciple.

O How great is the store of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them

them that fear thee ! When I remember some devout persons who come unto thy Sacrament , O Lord, with great devotion and affection, I am oftentimes confounded, and blush within my self, that I come so negligently and coldly to thy Altar, to thy table of holy Communion : That I remain so dry, and without spiritual motion pre-feeling, that I am not wholly inflamed in thy presence, my God, nor so earnestly drawn and moved, as many devout persons have been, who out of a vehement desire of receiving, and a feeling affection of heart, could not contain themselves from weeping, but with the desire both of soul and body they earnestly longed after thee , O God, the lively fountain ; being not otherwise able to temper nor satisfy their hunger but by receiving thy body with all joy and spiritual greediness.

426. *The following*

2. O most ardent faith of those persons, a profitable argument of thy sacred presence ! For they truly know their Lord in the breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so within them, whilst thou, O blessed Jesu, walkest with them. Such desire and devotion, so vehement love and fervency is oftentimes far off from me. Be merciful unto me, good Jesu, sweet and benign Lord, and grant me thy poor needy creature, to feel sometimes, at least in this holy Sacrament, a little cordial desire of thy love ; that my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in thy goodness increased, and that my charity once perfectly inflamed, after the tasting of heavenly Manna may never decay.

3. Thy mercy, O Lord, is, able to give me the grace I desire, and to visit me in thy bounteous clemency with the spirit of fervour,

vour, when it shall please thee. For although I burn not with so great desire as those that are so especially devoted unto thee : Yet notwithstanding by thy grace, I desire to have this great inflamed desire, praying and craving that I may participate with all such thy fervent lovers, and be numbred among them in their holy company.

C H A P. XV.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility, and denial of our selves.

The voice of the Beloved.

THou oughtest to seek the grace of devotion instantly, to ask it earnestly, to expect it patiently and confidently, to receive it joyfully, to keep it humbly,

428 *The Following*

bly, to work with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heavenly visitation to God, until it shall be his pleasure to come. Thou oughtest chiefly to humble thy self, when thou feelest inwardly little or no devotion, and yet not to be too much dejected, nor to grieve inordinately for it. God often giveth in a short moment that, which he hath long time denied: He giveth sometimes in the end that, which is the beginning of prayer he deferred to grant.

2. If grace should be always presently given, and at hand ever with a wish, it could not be well endured by a weak man. Therefore devotion is to be expected with good hope, and humble patience: Yet impute it to thy self, and thy sins, when it is not given thee, or when it is secretly taken from thee. It is sometimes a small matter that hindreth, and hideth

hideth grace from us, if it be to be called small, and not rather a great matter, that hindreth so great a good. And if thou remove this, be it great or small, and perfectly overcome it, thou shalt have thy desire.

3. For presently as soon as thou givest thy self to God, and seekest not this nor that, for thy own pleasure or will, but settlest thy self wholly in me, thou shalt find thy self united unto him, and quiet. For nothing will tast so well and please thee so much, as the will and pleasure of God. Whosoever therefore with a sincere heart directeth his intention to God, and purgeth himself from all inordinate love, or dislike of any creature, shall be most fit to receive grace, and worthy of the gift of devotion. For our Lord bestoweth his blessings there, where he findeth his vessels empty. And how much the more perfectly

430 *The following*

perfectly one forsaketh these basest thinks, and dieth to himself by contempt of himself: So much the more speedily grace cometh, and entreth in more plentifully, and lifteth up the heart that is free, to a higher state of grace.

4. Then shall he see, and abound, and wonder, and his heart shall be enlarged, because the hand of our Lord is with him, and he hath put himself wholly into his hand for ever. Behold so shall the man be blessed that seeketh Almighty God with his whole heart, and taketh not his name in vain. This man deserveth great grace of divine union, in receiving the holy Eucharist, for that he regardeth not his own devotion and comfort, but above all devotion and comfort, he prizeth the honour and glory of God.

C H A P. XVI.

That we ought to manifest our necessities to Christ, and to crave his grace.

The voice of the Disciple.

O Most sweet and loving Lord whom I now desire to receive devoutly, thou knowest my infirmity and the necessity which I endure ; with how many sins I am oppressed, how often I am grieved, tempted, troubled, and defiled. I come unto thee for remedy, I crave of thee thy heavenly comfort, and the ease of my pain. I speak to him that knoweth all things, to whom all my secrets are open, and who can only perfectly comfort and help me. Thou knowest what it is ; whereof above all things I stand

stand in most need, and how poor I am in vertues.

2. Behold I stand before thee, poor and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy. Refresh this thy hungry and needy creature, give heat unto my coldness with the fire of thy love; give light unto my blindness with the brightness of thy presence. Turn all earthly things unto me, into bitterness, all things grievous and contrary, into patience, all base and created things, into contempt and oblivion. Lift up my heart to thee in heaven, and suffer me not to wander upon earth: Be thou only sweet and delightful unto me from henceforth for evermore, for thou only art my meat and my drink, my love and my joy, my delight and all my good.

3. O that with thy presence thou wouldest wholly inflame, burn and change me into thee, that I might be made one spirit with thee

thee by the grace of inward vni-
on and melting of burning love!
Suffer me not to go from thee
hungry and dry, but deal merci-
fully, with me, as thou hast of-
tentimes dealt wonderfully with
thy Saints. What marvel if I
should be wholly inflamed by thee,
and dye in my self, since thou
art fireburning and never decay-
ing, love purifying the heart, and
inlightning the understanding.

C H A P. XVII.

*Of burning love and vehement
desire to receive Christ.*

The voice of the Disciple

With great devotion and burn-
ing love, with most hearty
affection and fervour I desire to
receive thee, O Lord, as many
Saints and devout persons have
desired

434 *The following*

desired thee, when they received thy Sacrament, who were most pleasing unto thee in holiness of life, and most fervent in devotion. O my God, my everlasting love, my whole good, my happiness without end, I would gladly receive thee with the most vehement desire, and worthy reverence, that any of the Saints ever had, or could feel.

2. And although I be unworthy to have all those feelings of devotion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I alone had those most sweet inflamed desires: Yea whatsoever also a devout mind can conceive and desire, all that, with greatest reverence, and most inward affection I offer and present unto thee. I wish to desire nothing my self, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice my self and all mine unto thee, my Lord God, my Creator, and my Redeemer.

I desire to receive thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour, with such gratitude, worthiness, and love, with such faith, hope, and purity as thy most blessed Mother, the glorious Virgin *Mary* received, and desired thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the Angel, who declared unto her the mystery of thy Incarnation, and said: Behold the hand maid of our Lord, let it be done unto me according to thy word.

3. And as thy blessed Fore-runner, the most excellent amongst the Saints, *John Baptist*, cheerfully leaped with joy of the holy Ghost, whilst he was yet shut up in his mothers womb; and afterwards seeing Jesus walking amongst men, humbling himself very much, said with devout affection: The friend of the Bridegroom that standeth and heareth him, rejoyceth with joy for the voice

436 *The following*

voice of the Bridegroom : So I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires and to offer my self up to thee with my whole heart. Wherefore I offer also and present unto thee the joyes, fervent desires, excesses of mind, spiritual illuminations, and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the vertues and praises exercised, and to be exercised by all creatures in heaven and earth, for my self, and all such as are commended to me in prayer, that by all thou maist be worthily praised, and glorified for ever.

4. Receive, my Lord God, the affections of my heart, and the desires of infinite praise and thanks, which according to the measure of thy unspeakable greatness are due unto thee. These I yeild thee, and desire to yeild thee every day and moment : I do intreat and invite all the heavenly spirits; and all thy devout servants

wants to give thanks and praises together with me.

5. Let all people, Tribes, and Tongues praise thee, and magnify thy holy and sweet name with great joy, and fervent devotion, and let all that reverently and devoutly celebrate thy most high Sacrament, and receive it with full faith, deserve to find grace. And mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me sinful creature and when they shall have obtained their desired devotion and joyful union, and depart from thy sacred heavenly table well comforted and marvelously refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember my poor and needy soul.

CHAP. XVIII.

*That man must not be a curious
searcher of this Sacrament, but
an humble follower of Christ,
submitting his sense unto faith.*

The voice of the Beloved.

THOU oughtest to beware of
curious and unprofitable
searching into this most profound
Sacrament, if thou wilt not sink
into the depth of doubt. He
that is a searcher of Majesty, shall
be oppressed by glory. God is able
to work more then man can un-
derstand. A pious and humble in-
quiry of truth is tolerable, so he
be always ready to be taught, and
do endeavour to walk in the sound
paths of the ancient Father's doc-
trine.

2. Blessed is that simplicity,
that forsaketh the difficult ways
of questions, and goeth on in
the plain assured path of Gods
Com.

Commandments. Many have lost devotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of understanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not understand, nor conceive those things that are under thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are above thee? Submit thy self to God, and let thy sense be subject to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be given thee in that degree; as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted about faith and the Sacrament: But this is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy. Do not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou give answer to the doubts moved by the enemy, but believe the words of God, believe his Saints and Prophets, and the wicked Serpent will fly from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels and sinners;
whom

CHAP. XVIII.

*That man must not be a curious
searcher of this Sacrament, but
an humble follower of Christ,
submitting his sense unto faith.*

The voice of the Beloved.

THOU oughtest to beware of
curious and unprofitable
searching into this most profound
Sacrament, if thou wilt not sink
into the depth of doubt. He
that is a searcher of Majesty, shall
be oppressed by glory. God is able
to work more then man can un-
derstand. A pious and humble in-
quiry of truth is tolerable, so he
be always ready to be taught, and
do endeavour to walk in the sound
paths of the ancient Father's doc-
trine.

2. Blessed is that simplicity,
that forsaketh the difficult ways
of questions, and goeth on in
the plain assured path of Gods
Com.

Commandments. Many have lost devotion, whilst they would search after high things. Faith and sincere life are exacted at thy hands, not height of understanding, nor the depth of the mysteries of God. If thou doest not understand, nor conceive those things that are under thee, how shalt thou be able to comprehend those that are above thee? Submit thy self to God, and let thy sense be subject to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be given thee in that degree; as shall be profitable and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted about faith and the Sacrament: But this is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy. Do not regard nor dispute with thy thoughts, neither do thou give answer to the doubts moved by the enemy, but believe the words of God, believe his Saints and Prophets, and the wicked Serpent will fly from thee. It is oftentimes very profitable to the servant of God to suffer such things. For he tempteth not Infidels and sinners; whom

440 *The Following*

whom he already securely possesseth, but he sundry ways tempesteth and vexeth the faithful and devout.

4. Go forward therefore with a sincere and undoubted faith, and come to the Sacrament with unfeigned reverence, and whatsoever thou art not able to understand, commit securely to Almighty God. God deceiveth thee not: He is deceived that trusteth too much to himself. God walketh with the simple, revealeth himself to the humble, giveth understanding to little ones, openeth the senses of pure minds, and hideth grace from the curious and proud. Humane reason is weak, and may be deceived, but true faith cannot be deceived.

5. All reason and natural search ought to follow faith, not to go before it, nor impugn it. For faith and love do chiefly excel, and work in a hidden manner in this most blessed and excellent Sacrament. God, who is everlasting, and of infinite power, doth great and inscrutable things in heaven and in earth, and there is no searching of his wonderful works. If the works of God were such as might be easily comprehended by humane reason, they were not to be called wonderful and unspeakable.

FINIS.



SL

1910

1816

728